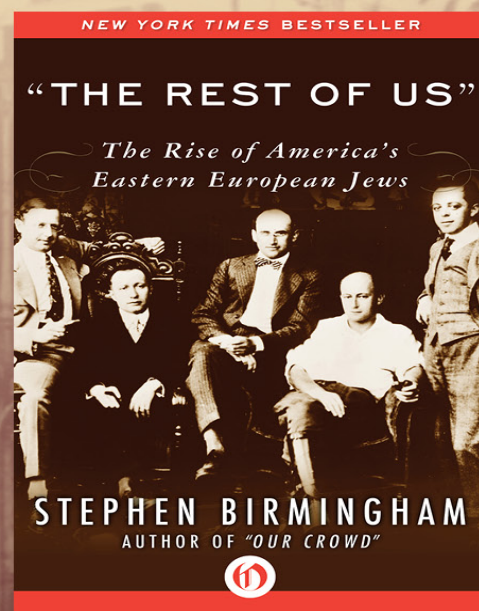
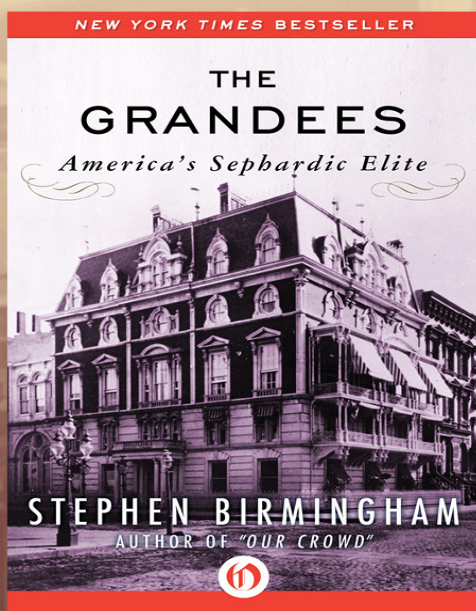
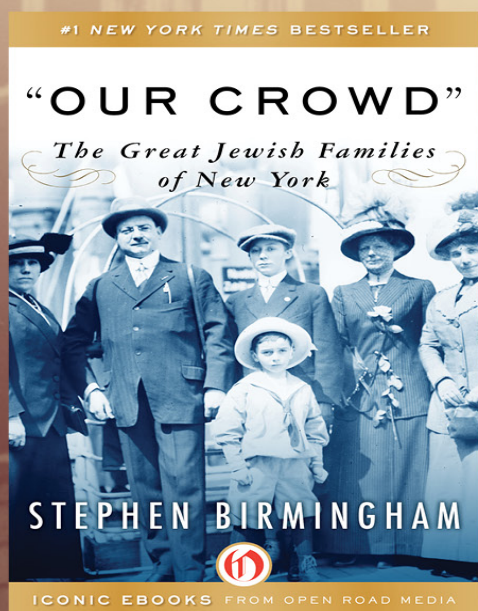


NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLERS

THE JEWS IN AMERICA TRILOGY

STEPHEN BIRMINGHAM



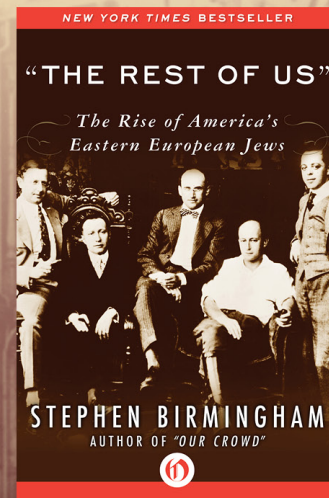
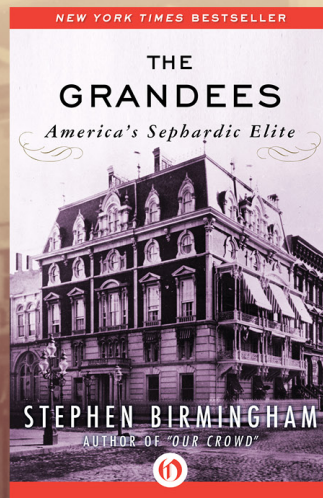
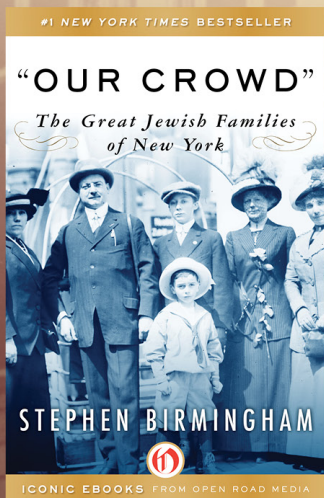
"OUR CROWD"
THE GRANDEES
"THE REST OF US"



NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLERS

THE JEWS IN AMERICA TRILOGY

STEPHEN BIRMINGHAM



“OUR CROWD”
THE GRANDEES
“THE REST OF US”





EARLY BIRD BOOKS

FRESH EBOOK DEALS, DELIVERED DAILY

BE THE FIRST TO KNOW—

NEW DEALS HATCH EVERY DAY!

SIGN UP NOW
at www.EarlyBirdBooks.com

PRAISE FOR THE WRITING OF STEPHEN BIRMINGHAM

The Auerbach Will

New York Times Bestseller

“Has the magic word ‘bestseller’ written all over it ... Birmingham’s narrative drive never falters and his characters are utterly convincing.” —
John Barkham Reviews

“Delicious secrets—scandals, blackmail, affairs, adultery ... the gossipy Uptown/Downtown milieu Birmingham knows so well.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“An engrossing family saga.” —*USA Today*

“Colorful, riveting, bubbling like champagne.” —*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

“Poignant and engrossing ... Has all the ingredients for a bestseller.” —
Publishers Weekly

The Rest of Us

New York Times Bestseller

“Breezy and entertaining, full of gossip and spice!” —*The Washington Post*

“Rich anecdotal and dramatic material ... Prime social-vaudeville entertainment.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“Wonderful stories ... All are interesting and many are truly inspirational.”
—*The Dallas Morning News*

“Entertaining from first page to last ... Those who read it will be better for the experience.” —*Chattanooga Times Free Press*

“Birmingham writes with a deft pen and insightful researcher’s eye.” —*The Cincinnati Enquirer*

“Mixing facts, gossip, and insight ... The narrative is engaging.” —*Library Journal*

“Immensely readable ... Told with a narrative flair certain to win many readers.” —*Publishers Weekly*

The Right People

New York Times Bestseller

“Platinum mounted ... The mind boggles.” —*San Francisco Examiner*

“To those who say society is dead, Stephen Birmingham offers evidence that it is alive and well.” —*Newsweek*

“The games some people play ... manners among the moneyed WASPs of America ... The best book of its kind.” —*Look*

“The beautiful people of *le beau monde* ... Mrs. Adolf Spreckels with her twenty-five bathrooms ... Dorothy Spreckels Munn’s chinchilla bedspread ... the ‘St. Grottle sex Set’ of the New England prep schools, sockless in blazers ... the clubs ... the social sports ... love and marriage—which seem to be the only aspect which might get grubbier. It’s all entertaining.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“It glitters and sparkles.... You’ll love *The Right People*.” —*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

“A ‘fun’ book about America’s snobocracy ... Rich in curiosa ... More entertaining than *Our Crowd* ... Stephen Birmingham has done a masterly job.” —*Saturday Review*

“Take a look at some of his topics: the right prep schools, the coming out party, the social rankings of the various colleges, the Junior League, the

ultra-exclusive clubs, the places to live, the places to play, why the rich marry the rich, how they raise their children.... This is an 'inside' book." —
The Washington Star

"All the creamy people ... The taboo delight of a hidden American aristocracy with all its camouflages stripped away." —Tom Wolfe, *Chicago Sun-Times*

The Wrong Kind of Money

"Fast and wonderful. Something for everyone." —*The Cincinnati Enquirer*

"Dark doings in Manhattan castles, done with juicy excess. A titillating novel that reads like a dream. Stunning." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"Birmingham ... certainly keeps the pages turning. Fans will feel at home." —*The Baltimore Sun*

The Jews in America Trilogy
**“Our Crowd,” The Grandees, and “The
Rest of Us”**

Stephen Birmingham



Contents

[“Our Crowd”](#)

[The Grandees](#)

[“The Rest of Us”](#)

[About the Author](#)

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

“OUR CROWD”

*The Great Jewish Families
of New York*



STEPHEN BIRMINGHAM



ICONIC EBOOKS FROM OPEN ROAD MEDIA

“Our Crowd”

The Great Jewish Families of New York

Stephen Birmingham



For the children:
Mark, Harriet, Carey

Contents

PREFACE

PART I A PARTICULAR PRINCIPALITY

1 *“People We Visit”*

PART II OUT OF THE WILDERNESS (1837–1865)

2 *“Mount Seligman”*

3 *“Mount Beautiful”*

4 *On the Road*

5 *Mrs. Rankin’s Galoshes*

6 *On to the City*

7 *Matters of Status*

8 *Matters of Style*

9 *To the Gold Fields*

10 *“This Unholy Rebellion”*

PART III INTO THE MAINSTREAM (1866–1899)

11 *Peddlers in Top Hats*

12 *The “Our Dear Babette” Syndrome*

13 *“Getting Our Feet Wet”*

14 *“The D—d Railroads!”*

15 *“My Bank”*

16 *The Assimilationists*

17 *“The Haughty and Purse-Proud Rothschilds”*

18 *The Seligman-Hilton Affair*

PART IV THE AGE OF SCHIFF

- 19 *“A Complex Oriental Nature”*
- 20 *“Your Loving Kuhn, Loeb & Company”*
 - 21 *The Emerging Giants*
 - 22 *Mr. Schiff vs. Mr. Loeb*
 - 23 *Portrait of a Father*
 - 24 *The Mittelweg Warburgs*
 - 25 *Marriage, Schiff Style*
- 26 *“The Battle of the Giants”*
- 27 *“Der Reiche Lewisohn”*
- 28 *The Poor Man’s Metal*
- 29 *Further Adventures Underground*
 - 30 *Twilight of a Banker*
 - 31 *The Ladies*
 - 32 *Sons, Doubters, Rebels*
- 33 *Elberon, and Points North and South*
- 34 *The Guggenheim-Lewisohn Battle*
- 35 *Monsieur Journet’s Nightgown*
- 36 *The Great Battle of 1109 Fifth Avenue*
- 37 *“Witty and Interesting Personalities”*
 - 38 *The Equitable Life Affair*
- 39 *“I Enclose My Check for \$2,000,000 ...”*
 - 40 *The “Sinister Transmutation”*
 - 41 *Calamities and Solutions*
 - 42 *The Rise of a House of Issue*
 - 43 *“Pflicht und Arbeit”*

PART V NEW YORK 21, N.Y.

- 44 *The End of a Line*
- 45 *The Fall, and After*
- 46 *The End of a Dream*
- 47 *Where Are They Now?*
- 48 *“Familiengefühl” ... and No Bare Feet at Dinner*

Index

Preface

It was my intention, when I undertook to write this book, *not* to write a book that would be simply “about rich people.”

To be sure, none of the families here portrayed is needy. Far from it. But—to me, at least—their accomplishments and their contributions to the special spirit and *élan*, as well as to the physical appearance, of New York City make the fact of their wealth seem secondary. It was my feeling, when I considered this book, that such names as Lehman, Lewisohn, Schiff, Loeb, Warburg, Guggenheim, Seligman, Kahn, Straus, Goldman, and Sachs are nationally, and in most cases internationally, known. They stand for banking and industrial efficiency, government service, philanthropy, and vast patronage of the arts, science, and education. And yet, due to a persistent reticence and unwillingness to boast—which in themselves are noble attributes—the men and women who made these names celebrated are little understood as human beings. It was my hunch that behind the marble façades lived people with as much capacity for folly, and grandeur, as human beings everywhere. It should come as no surprise that this turned out to be the case.

As a novelist, my interest has always been in the romance of people, and I suppose I am always a bit more concerned with what people *are* than what they do. And so one question may call for an answer: What is particularly significant about these German Jewish banking families? As a reader, I am an habitual peeker-ahead at endings, and so I shall open the book with the same thought as the one I close it with: These German Jewish families are more than a collective American success story. At the point in time when they were a cohesive, knit, and recognizably distinct part of New York society, they were also the closest thing to Aristocracy—Aristocracy in the best sense—that the city, and perhaps the country, had seen.

Obviously, it was not possible to take up each of the hundreds of people who composed, and compose, “our crowd.” I have tried only to write about

those men and women who to me seemed either the most exceptional, or the most representative, of their day.

I want to thank a number of people who have been particularly helpful with information, guidance, and suggestions in the preparation of this book.

I am indebted to Geoffrey T. Hellman for permission to quote from his published material, for supplying me with documents, manuscripts, letters, photographs, and personal reminiscences of his family, the Seligmans, as well as for magically unearthing the unpublished autobiography of Adolph Lewisohn, which neither Mr. Lewisohn's children nor grandchildren knew existed. I am grateful to Mrs. Joseph L. Seligman of New York for further material on her husband's family; to Mrs. Carola Warburg Rothschild for similarly kind and gracious assistance with memories and family papers pertaining to the Warburgs, "old" Loebes, and Schiffs, and for giving me access to the memoirs of her mother, the late Frieda Schiff Warburg. I also thank Mrs. Dorothy Lehman Bernhard, and her sons Robert A. and William L. Bernhard, for insights into the Lehman clan; Mrs. Phyllis Goodhart Gordan, for data concerning the Goodharts and Walters; Mr. Frank Lewisohn and Mrs. Joan Lewisohn Simon, for their help with Lewisohn recollections.

I am deeply grateful to Mrs. August Philips (Emanie Arling) for permission to quote from her novel, *Red Damask* (which she wrote under the name Emanie Sachs), for her spirited recollections of the days when she herself was a part of "the crowd," and for her enthusiastic interest in my project. To Mr. Walter E. Sachs, I am indebted for Sachs and Goldman family and business reminiscences, as well as for access to his own unpublished autobiography. I would like to thank Messrs. Lee Klingenstein of Lehman Brothers, Carl J. White of J. & W. Seligman & Co., Benjamin Sonnenberg, James F. Egan, Norman Retchin, David L. Mitchell of S. G. Warburg & Company, Ltd., and Professor Oscar Handlin of Harvard for their suggestions and pointers during various stages of the book, and Beverley Gasner, who read the book's first draft with an especially finicky eye.

This is the moment, too, to say a special word of thanks to Mrs. Mireille Gerould, who took on the job of financial researcher for the book with cheerful vigor, despite the fact that her research took her through periods of banking history when records, if kept at all, were kept most sketchily.

Though each of the people above has contributed to the book, I alone must be held responsible for its shortcomings.

I would also like to thank my friend and agent, Carol Brandt, for her coolheaded guidance of the project from the beginning, and to say a special word of praise to my friend and *wife*, Janet Tillson Birmingham, whose typing endurance is supreme and whose editorial hunches and suggestions are unerringly right. At Harper & Row, for their enthusiasm and moral support, I am grateful to Cass Canfield and the Misses Genevieve Young and Judith Sklar and, last but hardly least, to my editor, Roger H. Klein, who was first to propose that this was a book worth writing, and whose intelligence and taste have, in the process, affected nearly every page.

S.B.

PART I

A PARTICULAR PRINCIPALITY

“PEOPLE WE VISIT”

By the late 1930's the world of Mrs. Philip J. Goodhart had become one of clearly defined, fixed, and immutable values. There were two kinds of people. There were “people we visit” and “people we wouldn't visit.” She was not interested in “people we wouldn't visit” When a new name came into the conversation, Mrs. Goodhart would want to know, “Is it someone we would visit? Would visit?” She had an odd little habit of repeating phrases. If one of her granddaughters brought a young suitor home, she would inquire, “There are some Cohens in Baltimore. We visit them. Are you one of them? One of them?”

Granny Goodhart's rules were simple and few. One's silver should be of the very heaviest, yet it should never “look heavy.” One's clothes should be of the very best fabrics and make, but should never be highly styled, of bright colors, or new-looking. Mink coats were for women over forty. Good jewels should be worn sparingly. One hung good paintings on one's walls, of course. But that anyone outside the family and the “people we visit” should ever see them was unthinkable. (House and art tours for charity, where one's collection could be viewed by the general public, had not yet come into fashion in New York; if they had, Mrs. Goodhart would have considered it a dangerous trend.) She believed that little girls should wear round sailor hats and white gloves, and that boys should concentrate on Harvard or Columbia, not Princeton. Princeton had graduated too many people she did not visit.

She believed that good upholstery improved, like good pearls, with wearing. She did not care for Democrats because she had found most of them “not gentlemen.” It was hard to reconcile this with the fact that her own brother, Herbert Lehman, was Democratic Governor of New York

State and was associating with “people like Roosevelt.” She had never visited the Roosevelts, and wouldn’t if she had been asked. As a Lehman, she belonged to one of New York’s most venerable Jewish families (her husband’s family, the Goodharts, were not to be sneezed at either), and she was entitled to her views. And, since most of the people she visited, and who visited her, lived much as she did and felt as she did about most matters, she was able to move through her dowager years in an atmosphere of perpetual reassurance.

She was concerned with her friends’ health in general and with her husband’s in particular. She worried about his tendency to overweight. “Now I think, Philip, you will not have the fish soufflé the soufflé,” she would say to him as the dish was passed to him. (But her maid, Frances, was on Mr. Goodhart’s side; she always managed to slip a little on his plate.) Her husband often used the *Wall Street Journal* as a screen at the dinner table, and ate behind it.

There were few ripples in the pattern of her life. Once her cook broke her leg, and Granny Goodhart took to nursing the poor woman, who was well on in years herself and had been in the family “forever.” Each night, at table, Mrs. Goodhart would deliver a report on the broken leg’s progress. One night her husband said sharply, “Damn it, Hattie! You mustn’t sympathize with her or she’ll never learn!” Hattie Goodhart went right on sympathizing, of course, but stopped talking about it.

There were occasional other unsettling experiences. She and her friends did not believe in “making a point” of being Jewish, or of being anything, and sometimes this led to confusion. One of her Lehman sisters-in-law, a prominent Jewess like herself, was turned away from a hotel in the Adirondacks because, of all things, the hotel politely said it had a policy and did not accept gentiles! Then there was the visit from the young California psychologist. He was connected with the Institute of Behavioral Sciences, and had been conducting Rorschach tests with college students to determine their reactions to Adolf Hitler’s anti-Jewish policies in Europe. Granny Goodhart met the young man in New York at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Frank Altschul. Everyone there was talking about what the young man was doing, and, after dinner, he offered to perform a few of his tests on the group. Granny took the Rorschach test, and—to the astonishment of everybody—it turned out that Granny was an anti-Semite!

Still, as one of the *grandes dames* of German Jewish society, Granny was admired and much loved by her friends. To her grandchildren she was a round little person smelling of wool and Evening in Paris who greeted them at the door with outstretched arms and peppermint candies clutched in both hands, and gathered them in. She may have had her ways, but at least she was true to them.

And, watching this doughty little lady walking slowly through the rooms of her house, it was possible—*almost* possible—to believe that Granny Goodhart’s ways were eternal ways, and that hers was a world that had always been and would always be.

Most of the people Granny Goodhart visited lived within a clearly defined area—those blocks of prime Manhattan real estate between East Sixtieth and East Eightieth streets, bordered by Fifth Avenue, known in pre-Zip Code days as New York 21, N.Y.—in houses served, in the days before all-digit dialing, by Manhattan’s “great” telephone exchanges: TEmpleton 8, REgent 2, RHineland 4. It was a world of quietly ticking clocks, of the throb of private elevators, of slippered servants’ feet, of fires laid behind paper fans, of sofas covered in silver satin. It was a world of probity and duty to such institutions as Temple Emanu-El (a bit more duty than devotion, some might say), that stronghold of Reform Judaism, and its rabbi, Dr. Gustav Gottheil, and duty to such causes as Montefiore and Mount Sinai hospitals, the Henry Street Settlement, and the New York Association for the Blind, whose annual ball is one of the great fixtures in the life of the Jewish upper class. For the children, it was a world of discipline and ritual—social as much as religious—of little boys in dark blue suits and fresh white gloves, little girls in dresses of fuchsia satin, learning to bow from the waist and curtsy at Mrs. Viola Wolff’s dancing classes, the Jewish answer to Willie De Rham’s. It was a world of heavily encrusted calling cards and invitations—to teas, coming-out parties, weddings—but all within the group, among the people Granny Goodhart visited, a city within a city.

It was a world of curious contradictions. It held its share of decidedly middle-class notions (dry-cleaning did not really clean a dress, no matter what the advertisements said—every young girl was taught this), and yet it was also a world of imposing wealth. Granny Goodhart’s lifetime spanned an era, from the Civil War days into the 1940’s, when wealth was the single,

most important product of New York City. It was an era when Fifth Avenue was still a street of private houses, and the great mansions to which everyone was periodically invited included Otto Kahn's sprawling palace, Jacob Schiff's castle, the Felix Warburgs' fairy-tale house of Gothic spires. It was a world where sixty for dinner was commonplace (it was Otto Kahn's favorite number), and where six hundred could gather in a private ballroom without crowding. It was a world that moved seasonally—to the vast "camps" in the Adirondacks (not the Catskills), to the Jersey Shore (not Newport), and to Palm Beach (not Miami)—in private railway cars. A total of five such cars was needed to carry Jacob Schiff and his party to California. Chefs, stewards, butlers, valets, and maids traveled with their masters and mistresses, and a nurse for each child was considered essential. Every two years there was a ritual steamer-crossing to Europe and a ritual tour of spas.

Yet it was not particularly a world of fashion. One would find *The Economist*, *Barron's*, and the *Atlantic Monthly* on the coffee table more often than *Vogue* or *Town and Country*. One would expect to find a collection of Impressionist paintings, or of fine books, rather than elaborate furs or jewels. One worried about being "showy," and spared no expense to be inconspicuous. Granny Goodhart's sister-in-law was the daughter of Adolph Lewisohn, a man who spent \$300 a month for shaves alone. To keep his Westchester estate from being an eyesore to his neighbors, he employed thirty full-time gardeners to manicure his acreage and nurse his fourteen hothouses. He was so determined that his parties be in the best of taste—for years his New Year's Eve ball in his Fifth Avenue house was one of the largest in the city—that, to keep his cellars supplied with the best wine and spirits, he ran up an average bill of \$10,000 a month. And yet, at the same time, he had become interested in prison reform. When not giving dinner parties for his friends, he could be found at Sing Sing, dining with this or that condemned man in Death Row. He gave the stadium that bears his name to City College because, as he put it, "They asked me to."

Mr. Lewisohn's friend and neighbor, Felix Warburg, had a squash court in his city house, another in his country house—which also had a polo field—a yacht, a full Stradivarius string quartet, and a set of black harness horses identically marked with white stars on their foreheads. When Mr. Warburg was depressed, he had a gardener build him a platform high in a

tree; from there, Warburg would consider the possibility of clearing another of his famous “vistas” from the surrounding woods. Yet he was so inordinately domestic that, upon checking into a hotel room in a foreign city, the first thing he did was to rearrange the furniture into the coziest possible “conversational groupings.” He liked to give away a million dollars at a clip to a list of some fifty-seven different charities, and yet when his children asked their father how much money he had, he would make a zero with his thumb and forefinger. It was a world, in other words, that gave equal weight to modesty and dignity as to pomp, comfort, and splendor. Jacob Schiff, for whom one private Pullman was seldom ample, could therefore send his son home from a party because the boy’s suit was too “flashy.”

Mr. Willie Walter, whose daughter was married to Granny Goodhart’s son, owned a custom-built Pierce-Arrow which he kept constantly replenished with new Packard engines. An astonishing piece of machinery, it was tall enough for a man to stand in. Mr. Walter suffered from glaucoma, and believed that it was the result of striking his head on the ceiling of a low car. There was, therefore, a practical reason for the automobile’s imposing proportions. The tallest car in New York was always driven with its window shades down, and, both inside and out, its decor was restrained; every bit of chrome was oxidized so that it would have no glare, out of consideration for Mr. Walter’s sensitive eyes. Though the Pierce-Arrow could be seen coming from blocks away, its head high above the heads of others, Mr. Walter also believed that toning down the car’s trimmings made it less “conspicuous.” (After Willie Walter’s death, his heirs sold the Pierce-Arrow to James Melton, a classic-car enthusiast; Melton painted it, polished it, added all sorts of shiny gadgetry, and sold it to Winthrop Rockefeller, who added even more. You should see it now.)

To the city outside, this world seemed exotic and remote. It was envied, misunderstood, resented, but more often than not it was simply ignored, which was exactly what members of the Jewish upper class preferred. Overlooked, the group flourished and grew. It developed an outer shell that was opaque and impervious to prying. Within, a territory existed as intricately designed and convoluted as a chambered nautilus, a particular principality cloistered inside the world of the very rich. To those who lived there, it was all there was. It was New York’s *other* Society—a citadel of

privilege, power, philanthropy, and family pride. What was *not* so apparent was that it was also a citadel of uncertainty and fear. Under the seemliness there was bitterness, jealousy, warfare—no more and no less than in any society. One had to be brought up in the castle to realize that. For even murder, when it occurred, was politely kept “within the family.”

Among the people Granny Goodhart visited were the Loebes, Sachses, Guggenheims, Schiffs, Seligmans, Speyers, Strauses, Warburgs, Lewisohns, and of course other Lehmans and Goodharts. There were also the Baches, the Altschuls, the Bernheimers, Hallgartens, Heidelbachs, Ickelheimers, Kahns, Kuhns, Thalmanns, Ladenburgs, Wertheims, Cahns, Bernhards, Sheftels, Mainzers, Stralems, Neustadts, Buttenwiesers, Josephthals, Hellmans, Hammersloughs, Lilienthals, Morgenthau, Rosenwalds, Walters, and Wolffs. With the exception of the Guggenheims—who came from German-speaking Switzerland—all these families trace their origins to Germany (a surprising number to Bavaria). They have referred to themselves as “the One Hundred,” as opposed to “the Four Hundred.” They have been called the “Jewish Grand Dukes.” But most often they have simply called themselves “our crowd.”

The men of our crowd made their fortunes as merchants or bankers or—in the now somewhat antique phrase—as “merchant bankers.” Their business monuments include R. H. Macy & Company (Strauses), Abraham & Straus (Abrahams, Strauses, and Rothschilds—“the Brooklyn branch” of the European Rothschilds), and a number of celebrated investment and banking houses in Wall Street, including Lehman Brothers; Hallgarten & Company; Speyer & Company; Kuhn, Loeb & Company; Goldman, Sachs & Company; J. & W. Seligman & Company; J. S. Bache & Company; and Carl M. Loeb, Rhoades & Company. Families such as the Lewisohns and Guggenheims, whose fortunes are usually associated with mining and smelting, also maintained banking houses downtown. Some families, such as the Wertheims, moved from manufacturing (cigars) into banking (Wertheim & Company).

For a long time you either belonged to “our crowd” or you didn’t. For several generations the crowd was strikingly intramural when it came to marriage, making the crowd—to the larger crowd outside it—seem so cohesive and tight-knit as to be impenetrable. The “people we visit” became also the people we married. In the first American generation, a number of

founding fathers married their own close relatives. Joseph Seligman and his wife were first cousins, and in the next generation Joseph's brother's daughter married Joseph's sister's son. Meyer Guggenheim married his stepsister, and a Lewisohn married his own niece—and had to go to Europe to do it since such a union was, at that time, against the law in the United States—and as a result of this match he became a great-uncle to his children and his brother's son-in-law. Three Seligman brothers married three sisters named Levi; several other Seligmans married Walters, and several married Beers. The Seligmans also followed the Jewish practice of offering widows in the family to the next unmarried son, by which process several women became double Seligmans. Double cousinships abound. Seligmans have also married Hellmans, Loeb, Lewisohns, Lilienthals, Guggenheims and Lehman; Lehman, who have married first-cousin Lehman, have in addition married Lewisohns, Bottenwiesers, and Ickelheimers; Ickelheimers have married Stralens; Stralens have married Neustadts; Neustadts have married Schiffs; Schiffs have married Loeb and Warburgs; Warburgs have married Loeb, who, of course, have married Seligmans.

Today the intermarriage within the crowd presents a design of mind-reeling complexity. But envision a dewy cobweb in the early morning on a patch of grass. Each drop of dew represents a great private banking house; the radii that fan out are sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters, and the lacy filaments that tie the whole together are marriages. Kuhn, Loeb & Company was originally composed of a particularly tight network of love—with Kuhn and Loeb (who were brothers-in-law) both related to Abraham Wolff, another K-L partner whose daughter married yet another partner, Otto Kahn. A Loeb son married a Kuhn daughter, and another Loeb daughter married another partner, Paul Warburg, while Jacob Schiff's daughter Frieda married Paul Warburg's brother Felix (a partner too). This turned an aunt and her niece into sisters-in-law, and made Paul his brother's uncle.

At Goldman, Sachs, two Sachs boys married Goldman girls, and another Goldman girl married Ludwig Dreyfus (a G-S partner), who was related by marriage to the above-mentioned Loeb, and a Sachs daughter married a Macy's Straus, while another Sachs daughter married a Hammerslough whose sister was married to a Rosenwald of Sears, Roebuck & Company.

(Not surprisingly, when Sears puts a new stock issue on the market this is done by Goldman, Sachs & Company.)

The two founding fathers of J. S. Bache & Company, Leopold Cahn and Semon Bache, were linked in marriage as well as business, with Leopold married to Semon's wife's sister. Semon's son, Jules, married Florence Sheftel, the sister of another Bache partner. At Hallgarten & Company four principal partners—Charles Hallgarten, Bernard Mainzer, Casimir Stralem, and Sigmund Neustadt—were similarly intertwined: Hallgarten married to Mainzer's sister, and Stralem married to Neustadt's daughter. Heidelbach, Ickelheimer & Company was founded, in 1876, as the result of a marriage, when Isaac Ickelheimer married Philip Heidelbach's daughter. At a Westchester party recently, a Klingenstein, related to Lehman's, and a Kempner, related to Loeb's, were asked if they weren't also related to each other. "I suppose so" was the reply.

For many years Wall Street firms such as these obeyed a kind of Salic law, with partnerships descending only to sons and sons-in-law. This discouraged outsiders and encouraged intermarriage. "In the old days on the Street," says one stockbroker, "your relatives were the only people you could trust." There was another reason. In the old days, if you were a Jewish immigrant, the only person you could turn to if you needed money was a relative. For forty-four years after its founding in 1867, Kuhn, Loeb & Company had no partners who were not related by blood or marriage to the Loeb-Kuhn-Wolff family complex. For nearly fifty years after Goldman, Sachs was founded, all partners were members of the intermarried Goldman and Sachs families. The Lehman's hardly seemed to need intermarriage at all; until 1924, nearly seventy-five years after the firm was founded, all the partners were named Lehman.

Two firms one might suppose had sprung from the same forebears—Kuhn, Loeb and Carl M. Loeb, Rhoades—did not. The Loeb's of Kuhn, Loeb are no kin to the Loeb's of Loeb, Rhoades, who are no kin to Harold Loeb and no kin to Gerald Loeb, the financial writer who works for E. F. Hutton & Company, nor to Leopold and Loeb who were a thrill-killing team from Chicago. The two New York banking families are always getting mixed up, even by the *New York Times*, which is usually most careful about such matters, but the descendants of Solomon (Kuhn, Loeb) Loeb, an earlier immigrant and founder of the more venerable house, are known in

the crowd as “the *real* Loeb.” Presumably, the descendants of Carl M. (Loeb, Rhoades) Loeb are unreal Loeb. The Rhoades name came in as a result of a nonmarital merger. Nobody knows quite why the name is retained (there are no Rhoadeses in the firm), unless for its overtones of Scholars and the Colossus of almost the same name. But by taking a tortuous route through Lehmans and Seligmans, it is possible to get these two Loeb families related to each other, by marriage.

The pattern of intermarriage has not always been strictly adhered to. Whenever someone marries “outside the crowd,” someone is bound to comment that German Jewish society isn’t a knit thing any more, that the structure is falling apart. Mixed marriages, anti-Semitism, and conversion are three linked themes that reappear often in the fugue of German Jewish life in New York. The Contents, for example, are a family of Dutch Jewish origin who were in New York long before the first Germans arrived. A number of German families have married Contents, and, as a result, Mrs. John D. Gordan,* a scholarly Bryn Mawr trustee—a granddaughter of Granny Goodhart—fell heir to two handsome Content family portraits. Painted in 1833, they are of Simon Content and his wife, Angeline, and each contains a mysterious detail. By Simon’s hand rests the Hebrew prayer book; by Angeline’s is the Book of Common Prayer. Willie Walter, Mrs. Gordan’s grandfather, used to frown at the pictures when he entered the room and mutter, “It was not a mixed marriage. It was *not!*”

By strict crowd standards, one does not have to marry out of the faith to enter into a *mésalliance*. Years ago, Samuel Sachs’s daughter, Ella, married a man named Harry Plotz, who was Polish, and there was a terrible fuss. It was not that young Plotz talked Socialism, but he talked Socialism so *loudly*. At about the same time, when Alva Bernheimer, who was definitely in the crowd, married the late Bernard Gimbel, who was not, this was considered an unfortunate match. The crowd considered the Gimbels “storekeepers.” Someone said, “One department store family is enough,” meaning the Strauses. Needless to say, with Gimbel’s and Macy’s the great Herald Square rivals, no Gimbel ever married a Straus.

When Gerald Warburg married Natica Nast, the daughter of Condé Nast, the crowd was just as startled. For a long time Natica, although a Catholic, was referred to as “a little Huguenot girl,” and, by her mother-in-law, as “a girl of French extraction.” The crowd still seemed unprepared, a generation

later in 1950, for Felicia Warburg's marriage to Robert W. Sarnoff—whom one member of the crowd explained was “the son of that Russian radio man,” Brigadier General David Sarnoff, chairman of the board of RCA. People had also sniffed in the 1920's when it was announced that John L. Loeb, son of Carl M., was engaged to marry the Arthur Lehman's youngest daughter, Frances. At the Seligman's Fishrock Camp in the Adirondacks someone said, “But those Loeb's aren't *the* Loeb's!”

But when R. Peter Straus married Ellen Sulzberger, the crowd was pleased to note that some people, at least, were doing the traditional—if increasingly rare—thing by marrying “within the crowd.”

As happens in any social group, the German Jewish crowd in New York has become stratified, and a certain pecking order has evolved based on seniority. There is an Old Guard—families who migrated to America between 1837 and 1860—which would include the Seligman's, Lehman's, Strauses, Sachses, Goldman's, and “perhaps” the Guggenheim's. The Guggenheim's are a problem because, though they arrived in America relatively early (but not so early as the Seligman's and Lehman's), they did not become staggeringly rich until relatively late, and did not arrive on the New York scene until 1888, at which point the other German Jewish families had already coalesced into a fixed group. It took the crowd a while to get used to the explosive presence of the Guggenheim's. As Peggy Guggenheim (whose mother was a Seligman) says of her two grandfathers, “Mr. Guggenheim far surpassed Mr. Seligman in amassing an enormous fortune and buying up most of the copper mines in the world, but he never succeeded in attaining Mr. Seligman's social distinction.” In fact, the Seligman's were upset when Peggy's mother consented to marry Mr. Guggenheim. They dispatched a curt wire to Paris relatives saying, “Florette engaged to Benjamin Guggenheim, smelter.” Everyone chuckled at the droll way the message became garbled crossing the Atlantic. It read, “Florette engaged. Benjamin Guggenheim smelt her.” Also Old Guard are the descendants of Solomon Loeb (of Kuhn, Loeb), though he was a somewhat younger man than the progenitor Seligman's and Lehman's, and did not move from Cincinnati to New York until 1865.

Another member of this first generation of German Jewish immigrants—though he was never a part of the Old Guard “crowd”—was August

Belmont. As German Jewish life became fuguelike, his influence provided an odd and troubling counterpoint.

Such names as Lewisohn, Schiff, and Thalmann belong to a younger generation who migrated to New York soon after the Civil War. The Warburgs and Otto Kahn belong to a third, still younger group who came in the 1890's. Kahn, Schiff, and the Warburg brothers became imposingly rich, and all three names became polarized around Kuhn, Loeb & Company. There is a general feeling that these youngsters did not have to work quite so hard for their money as the Old Guard did. A split began to develop within the crowd, between the bright, young, very rich "new group" and the settled, established, not-quite-so-rich "older group." It was not only a difference in ages, but a difference in how the two groups "did things." Though they all saw each other and entertained each other, there were—emotionally, at least—two crowds.

The Warburgs like to point out that the Warburg family were well-to-do bankers in Germany long before any of the Seligmans or Lehmans, who were poor, even dreamed of coming to America. The Lehman-Seligman camp is apt to say, "The Warburgs weren't anybody until they married into the Schiffs, and Schiff wasn't anybody until he married into the Loeb, so there you are." The Warburgs say loftily, "We came to America and showed all the others how to do it." To this, one of the Lehmans has replied sharply, "They tried to *tell* everybody how to do it, is what they mean. *Our* family never had much to do with that Schiff-Warburg group. We considered them terribly bossy. Of course there were some people who tried to play their game. It was called 'Keeping up with the Schiffs.'" "It must be terrible," Lord Lionel Rothschild is supposed to have said, "to be a Jew and not be named Rothschild." Clearly he was unaware of what was going on across the Atlantic in New York.

Today in New York, when members of the crowd get together, long hours can be spent arguing about which of the great German Jewish families is the greatest, or grandest, or has accomplished the most, or contributed the most. Which is the grandest of the families Cleveland Amory has labeled "The Jewish Grand Dukes"? Several think the Schiffs and the Warburgs, on the basis of their philanthropies alone, should receive the palm. Others champion the Strauses, who, though their money was made "in trade" (some Strauses branched out into banking), have not been idle as

philanthropists either, and have also contributed notable figures to the worlds of American diplomacy, publishing, and public service. Others argue that, if one is going to talk about public service and government, one must give first place to the Lehmans, who have contributed a New York Governor and U.S. Senator (Herbert), a prominent jurist (Irving), a major American art collector (Robert), and a promising young politician in the fourth generation (Orin).

But there are always the Seligmans. With their “social distinction,” they set the tone of German Jewish society in New York for many years. They occupy an anchoring position in the crowd. Without them it is possible that there might have been no crowd at all.

* Whose own marriage is a mixed one.

PART II

**OUT OF THE WILDERNESS 1837–
1865**

“MOUNT SELIGMAN”

In the late summer of 1964 a small item in the obituary page of the *New York Times* carried the news that “James Seligman, Stockbroker” had died at the age of seventy-four in his Park Avenue apartment, following a heart attack. A few perfunctory details followed. Mr. Seligman had been born in New York City, had graduated from Princeton, maintained an office downtown in Broad Street, and was survived by his wife and an elderly sister. No mention was made of the once great eminence of his family in financial circles, nor of the Seligmans’ still considerable prestige. No note was taken that Mr. Seligman’s grandfather, the first James Seligman, had been one of eight remarkable brothers who had composed J. & W. Seligman & Company, once an international banking house of vast importance and power. Nor was it noted that Mr. Seligman’s great-uncle, Joseph Seligman, the firm’s founder, had been a personification of the American success story. In slightly more than twenty years’ time, he had risen from an immigrant foot peddler to a financial adviser to the President of the United States.

The news item, however, contained one note that may have struck readers who knew the Seligman story as ironic. The Seligmans had once been known as the leading Jewish family in America. They had been called “the American Rothschilds.” The deceased’s grandfather for many years had been president of the board of trustees of New York’s Temple Emanu-El. (The office was supposed to be an annual one, but every year the first James Seligman got to his feet and said, “Nominations for vice president are now in order.”) Yet the obituary advised that funeral services would be held at Christ Church, Methodist.

The Seligmans may not have started everything, exactly, but they certainly started something. They also started early—proverbially an auspicious time. Few great American fortunes, furthermore—and few banking houses—have started from such unpromising beginnings. The base of Mount Seligman was humble indeed.

Baiersdorf is so small that it does not appear on most maps of Germany. It lies on the banks of the Regnitz River some twenty kilometers north of Nürnberg, near the edge of the Bohemian Forest. Old David Seligman was the village weaver. He was not technically “old,” but at twenty-nine he seemed so. A small, stooped, dour man, he was given to complaining about his lot.

There had been Seligmans in Baiersdorf for over a century. Theirs had been a family name long before Napoleon had decreed that Germany’s Jews no longer needed to be known as “sons” of their fathers’ names—Moses ben Israel, and so on. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century tombstones in Baiersdorf’s Jewish cemetery recorded the upright virtues of many of David’s ancestors, all named Seligman (“Blessed man” in German). To later generations in New York, this would become a fact of some importance. Families such as the Seligmans did not just “come” from Bavaria. They had been established there for many, many years.

None of the Baiersdorf Seligmans had been wealthy, but David seemed the poorest, most discouraged of the lot. He enjoyed poor health, made frequent trips to the cemetery, and from the words on headstones of departed Seligmans drew a kind of solitary comfort. He particularly admired one inscription from 1775:

HERE LIES BURIED

ABRAHAM SELIGMAN

IN RIPE OLD AGE, AN UPRIGHT MAN
HE WALKED THE WAY OF THE DOERS OF GOOD
JUST AND UPRIGHT HE ATTACHED HIS SOUL TO
RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND BUSIED HIMSELF WITH THE TEACHINGS OF
GOD AND WITH WORKS OF CHARITY
NIGHT AND DAY, FOREMOST AMONG MEN WHO

ARE BENEFACTORS

Such words did not apply to David. He was lonely and withdrawn. His boyhood friends were married and raising families, but David seemed resigned to bachelorhood. His little house in Baiersdorf's *Judengasse*, or "Jew Street," had begun to sag and leaned disconsolately against the next building. Business was terrible. Nevertheless, one morning in 1818, David returned from the neighboring village of Sulzbach with a plump, young girl named Fanny Steinhardt as his wife.

It was whispered on the *Judengasse* that David Seligman was incapable of fathering children. Fanny's condition during the next few months was watched with more than usual interest. One year after the marriage, Fanny bore David a son, Joseph. Over the next twenty years Fanny presented David with seven more sons and three daughters: William, James, Jesse, Henry, Leopold, Abraham, Isaac, Babette, Rosalie, and Sarah.

Child-bearing took its toll. Two years after the birth of her last child, at the age of forty-two, Fanny died. She had done her duty to the world. She had created the foundation of an international banking house.

But Fanny had given David more than eleven children. As her dowry, she had brought from Sulzbach a stock of dry goods—laces, ribbons, two feather beds, two dozen sheets, twenty pillowcases, and ten bolts of homespun cloth. These, she had cannily suspected, might appeal to the women of Baiersdorf. She had set up shop on the ground floor of David's house, and soon David, the weaver, had been able to call himself by the grander title of "woolen merchant," and had started a small side line selling sealing wax.

Joseph, her first-born, was Fanny's favorite child. As soon as he could see over the counter, he became his mother's assistant in her little shop. In the 1820's there was no German national monetary system. Coinage varied from region to region, and eight-year-old Joseph, at the cash drawer, was quick to notice this. As an accommodation to travelers passing through Baiersdorf, Joseph became a moneychanger—accepting out-of-town coins in exchange for local currency, and selling out-of-town money to men planning trips outside Bavaria. He made a small profit on each transaction. At the age of twelve he operated a miniature American Express Company. Foreign currency, including an occasional American dollar, passed through

his hands. He was learning economics, arithmetic, and a bit of geography, his mother pointed out and patted him on the head approvingly.

Fanny was ambitious for all her children, but she focused her dreams on Joseph. At night mother and son would sit opposite each other at the wooden table in the sputtering light of a kitchen candle while she, bent over her mending, talked and the boy listened. Joseph remembered his mother's small, plump hands, and a gesture she had—placing her hand flat out on the table when she made a point. She told him of places better than Baiersdorf, and David reproved her for filling the boy's head with “grandiose ideas.” He wanted Joseph for the woolen business.

But a Bavarian woolen business faced, in 1833, a gloomy future. Baiersdorf was a small town, and growing smaller. The Industrial Revolution was under way. Peasants, David's customers, were being forced from the land into industrial cities. Jobs and money in Baiersdorf were growing scarcer. The poor were faced with two choices, both involving further hardship: to move or struggle on where they were.

If the young German poor found themselves with little to look forward to, the outlook for young Jews was even more dismal. Jews were restricted on three sides—politically, economically, and socially. Forced to be peddlers, small shopkeepers, moneylenders—barred by law from dealing with goods that could not be carried with them—they were sequestered in the cramped *Judengassen* and trapped in a tightening strait jacket of regulations based on their religion. In the quarters where German laws forced them to live, they were permitted to own no property beyond the squares of land where their houses stood, and their right to even that much land was precarious. In Bavaria, where attitudes toward Jews were particularly reactionary, the number of Jewish marriages was limited by law in an attempt to keep the number of Jewish families constant. They were surrounded by a heavy network of special taxes, were obliged to pay the humiliating “Jew toll” whenever they traveled beyond the borders of the ghetto, were forced to pay a special fee for the privilege of not serving in the army—though it was an army that would not have accepted them had they tried to volunteer, because they were Jewish. Periodically, Jews were threatened with expulsion from their homes—and often were expelled—unless they paid an added tax for the privilege of remaining.

Three distinct currents of Jewish migration had begun in Europe. There was a migration from German villages in the south and east to northern cities, where Jews often found conditions somewhat worse than those they had faced before. (In 1816 the seven largest cities in Germany held only 7 percent of the Jewish population. A hundred years later over 50 percent of Germany's Jews lived in these seven cities.) There was a general east-to-west movement—out of Germany into England, Holland, and France. At the same time, there was a migratory wave *into* Germany from the east—from Czarist Russia and Poland. Some of these foreign Jews merely passed through Germany on their way to other lands, others stopped for a while, to rest. These latter had a further disruptive effect on the already shaky structure of Jewish communities. Some of these families paused long enough to pick up the German language and to take German names. (In future generations, in New York, it would become a matter of some importance whether such and such a Jewish family, with a German-sounding name, had been a true *native* German family, like the Seligmans, or a stranger from the east, passing through.) Swelled by immigrants from the east, the Jewish population in Western Europe more than tripled during the nineteenth century.

The final migratory move was also westward—across the Atlantic to the land of freedom and enlightenment, the land, moreover, of land and money. In 1819, the year Joseph Seligman was born, the American paddle-wheeler *Savannah* had been the first steam-driven vessel to cross the ocean. It made America seem wonderfully convenient. America fever swept through German villages, particularly in hard-pressed Bavaria. Already, from Baiersdorf, several bands of young men had taken off and were writing home of the wonders of the New World. Fanny Seligman wanted to get her children out of Germany, and she wanted Joseph to go armed with an education. She decided he would do something no Seligman had ever done. He would go to the university at Erlangen. He was just fourteen.

David Seligman protested that they could not afford it. But Fanny, in the best tradition of Jewish motherhood, is said to have gone to a dresser drawer, from which, carefully hidden behind a stack of linens, she withdrew a little knotted sack of gold and silver coins, her life's savings.

Joseph had pale blue, watery, heavy-lidded “Seligman eyes,” which gave him an absent-minded, daydreamy look that was deceptive. His face was

often set in a sleepy half-smile which gave strangers an impression that he was innocent, easygoing, even simple-minded. With a countrified accent and a changing voice, he loped around the University of Erlangen with his bag of books, a hayseed. Actually, Joseph was an extremely taut and sober-sided young man. He entered Erlangen with one determination—to get ahead. He avoided the social side of university life, and refused to be tempted by Erlangen’s famous beer. He possessed another quality that would stand him in good stead in the future. He had a thick skin. The plumpish, solemn, standoffish boy was often taunted by his schoolmates; at times they baited him fiercely. If he was hurt by this, he hid it beneath a shell of indifference.

He was a brilliant student. He studied literature and the classics and, after two years, delivered his farewell oration to the university in Greek. He had also learned some English and some French. Along with the German, Yiddish, and Hebrew that he already knew, he now had six languages. None of these talents was designed to help him sell woolens or sealing wax. Joseph came home from the university with one thought in mind—to go to America.

Among Jewish families the feeling still ran strong that emigration was for the desperately poor. A departing boy was an advertisement to the whole community that a father could no longer afford to feed his son. David Seligman would have to wear his son’s defection to America like a badge of shame, but there was an aspect of emigration that was even more alarming. From the land of freedom and enlightenment came rumors that young Jews in America were losing their religion.

It took Fanny a year to persuade David to let the boy go. Fanny made another trip to her little sack of coins—and got a secret loan from her Sulzbach relatives—for Joseph’s passage money. David’s final words to his son were a tearful entreaty to observe the Sabbath and the dietary laws. Fanny’s final gesture was to sew one hundred American dollars into the seat of Joseph’s pants.

In July, 1837, Joseph Seligman, seventeen years old, climbed on a horse-drawn wagon with eighteen other Baiersdorf boys. The trip to Bremen and the sea took them seventeen days. They camped along the roads at night. At Bremen Joseph bought passage on the schooner *Telegraph*, one of 142 steerage passengers. The price of a steerage ticket—forty dollars—included

one meal a day, an unvarying diet of pork, beans, and a cup of water. Since Jewish law prohibited pork, Joseph Seligman was required to disregard his father's instructions from the beginning. Steerage was cramped, dark, and filthy—years later Joseph used to say of his first crossing, “The less said about it the better”—and Joseph's bed was a wooden plank. Crossing the Atlantic took nine weeks.

Joseph, considerably slimmer, arrived in New York in September in the middle of the great Panic of 1837—hardly a cheerful omen for a future financier. But he did not intend to stay in New York long. Fanny had a cousin in Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania, and had urged Joseph to go to this unprepossessing outpost. Still with the hundred dollars sewn in his trousers, he started off on foot, a hike of just under a hundred miles.

The leading citizen in Mauch Chunk in those days was a man named Asa Packer, a native of Connecticut, who had established a yard where he built canal boats to haul coal from the local mines. Soon after arriving, Joseph presented himself to Mr. Packer, and the young Connecticut Yankee and the younger Bavarian Jew hit it off immediately. Joseph explained that he was good with figures, and Packer hired him as a cashier-clerk at the salary of \$400 a year.

Joseph's quick friendship with Packer displayed what was to become an enduring Seligman habit—the lucky habit of getting to know, and to be liked, by the right people. In 1837 Packer was no more than a prosperous small-town businessman. But this bearded, craggy-faced man was to become a multimillionaire, a United States Congressman (from 1853 to 1857), the founder—with a check for one million dollars—of Lehigh University, the president of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, and a very good friend for a banker to have.

“MOUNT BEAUTIFUL”

Young August Schönberg cannot have been called casual or “lucky” in his choice of friends; he chose them with too much care, not for their possible future helpfulness but for their present and specific use. Little is known about Schönberg’s forebears for a simple reason. In later years he elaborately blurred, and eventually erased, his antecedents. It is known that he was born in 1816—three years before Joseph Seligman—in the Rhineland Palatinate in western Germany, not far from the French border, the son of Simon Schönberg, a poor merchant. (Later on he liked to create the impression that his parents were people of great wealth; all the evidence suggests the opposite.) He was not, as Joseph Seligman was, a dutiful son. He was a wild, unruly, often violent, undisciplined boy with a harsh tongue and cruel ways, who repeatedly flouted his father’s authority—a cardinal sin in Jewish homes. Yet he had a razor-sharp mind and a biting wit.

A university, for an education or for polish, had no appeal for him whatever. He wanted to make money. At thirteen he went to Frankfurt—it is likely that he ran away from home—and went to work as an unpaid apprentice for the Rothschilds, the leading Jewish banking house in Europe. How he managed to get his toe in the Rothschild door is unclear.

There is evidence that the Rothschilds were appalled by Schönberg and yet fascinated by him. He was to exert this double effect on people throughout his life—aversion and, at the same time, attraction. He could be rough-spoken and abrupt, and he could be sweetly charming. One thing quickly became apparent to the Rothschilds—he was a financial genius. His first duties were sweeping floors, but he was soon admitted to discussions in the partners’ room.

Yet as Schönberg's value grew, he became something of an embarrassment to the Frankfurt Rothschilds. He did not fit the aristocratic Rothschild "image," and so, still in his teens, he was transferred to Naples, where he became very Neapolitan and handled financial negotiations with the Papal Court. At the age of twenty-one, he was reassigned to Havana, where the news of the New York Panic of 1837 reached him. A panic, to Schönberg, suggested a use for his money-making talents. He wound up his Havana business quickly and hurried to New York, arriving the same month as Joseph Seligman, traveling, of course, first class. With Rothschild money, he began buying in a splendidly depressed market.

But some strange sea change had taken place. He was no longer August Schönberg but August Belmont, the French equivalent of Schönberg (meaning "beautiful mountain"). As August Belmont, furthermore, he was no longer a Jew but a gentile, and no longer German but, as people in New York began to say, "Some sort of Frenchman—we think."

New York City in 1837 seems in many ways to have been waiting for a man with August Belmont's talents and tastes to come along. Certainly it was an auspicious moment for a young man eager to make his fortune in banking to descend upon the city, and Belmont arrived with the tremendous influence and backing of the House of Rothschild behind him. The city's mood was up; it was the beginning of the so-called Golden Era, which would see New York change from a provincial port into a giant metropolis. The War of 1812 had given the country confidence in itself, had strengthened its credit abroad (up to then the Rothschilds had considered the United States too unprofitable an enterprise to merit an American agent), and the great age of railroads had begun. The railroads opened up outlying land and carried people there. Railroads carried products back to port cities like New York where, in turn, they were traded to pay for the European imports the newly opened country needed.

New York, by 1837, though it still resembled a steepled and gabled Dutch village sprouting from the Battery at the tip of Manhattan Island, had become the chief financial center of the nation and its major port, through which passed commerce to be financed, goods to be auctioned, and the inland producers' bills of exchange, drawn on British merchant banks, which, to provide cash, had to be discounted. New York, until then, had stood a poor third to Boston and Philadelphia. It had remained under the

influence of the Dutch, whose chief economic interests had been limited to up-Hudson furs and their own vast estates outside the city. New York had not developed the tightly knit commercial and financial power groups of the older Eastern cities. There were not, as there were in Boston, such family complexes as the Cabot-Lowell-Lawrence group, which controlled and financed textile companies, or the Lee-Higginson-Jackson alliance, which dominated the money market. New York had not assumed the rigidity of Philadelphia, with its position as the seat of the only national banks the country had ever known. New York, in other words, was ready for the private banker—Pennsylvania in 1814 had passed a law outlawing private banking—it was a city for the entrepreneur, a city flexing its muscles and feeling young and big and strong. All this August Belmont was quick to sense.

New York was a merchant's city. It had become the chief wheat and flour market of the nation, shipping over a billion sacks of flour a year to Europe, and dispatching the major share of the country's cotton. It was also a gambler's city, and the young arriving immigrants—immigration itself was one of the biggest gambles of the day—only heightened the feeling of risk and speculation that was in the air. In the modern age of consumer goods, it is hard to imagine New York as a place where, though there was a great deal of money about, there was really very little to buy. But such was the case. In the absence of goods and luxuries in shops, New Yorkers spent their money gambling—buying and selling mortgages, bonds, IOU's and promissory notes. In 1792 the New York Stock Exchange—older even than London's—was formed under the famous buttonwood tree at the corner of Wall Street, and in 1817 it had been formally incorporated with a set of rules which, by today's standards, were delightfully lax, but which did require a listing of companies whose shares were being offered for trading. All over the country, people who wanted to gamble were turning to Wall Street. By the time of August Belmont's arrival, this casual bazaar was doing a volume of hundreds of millions of dollars a year. Farmers in the new Western lands were selling mortgages to buy stocks and bonds. Small manufacturers were both investing and offering their own shares for sale. Banking, though it had never had much order or logic or even rules, had had a certain predictability. Suddenly—almost overnight, it seemed—it became fast, frantic, and speculative.

The great pendulum pattern of boom followed by bust, which would dominate financial history for the next hundred years, had begun. The Panic of 1837, which would be followed by many more, was blamed on “the habit which all classes seem within the last few years to have contracted, of speculating beyond their means, of living beyond their income, of spending money before it was acquired, and of keeping up the appearance of men who had realized large fortunes while they were only in the act of accumulating them,” according to the *Herald*. Before the panic, a speculating American public had invested over a hundred million dollars in canal bonds alone. In this competitive, win-or-lose business, a new kind of bank—and a new kind of banker—was needed. August Belmont saw this. He noticed that the old names which had dominated the early note-issuing commercial banks—names such as Hamilton, Morris, and Willing—were not moving rapidly enough, or skillfully enough, into the new field.

In the Panic of 1837 Belmont was able to perform a service which he would repeat in subsequent panics, and which helped make him a friend to bankers and to the United States Government. By negotiating large loans from the Rothschilds, he was able to shore up United States debtor banks. In other words, he was able, thanks to the hugeness of the Rothschild reservoir of capital, to start out in America operating his own Federal Reserve System.

Socially, New York was not at all the city in 1837 that Boston, Philadelphia, or Charleston was, and here again August Belmont found a niche waiting to be filled. New York society, according to members of the Morris family, consisted only of the Morrises, of Morrisania, their enormous estate north of the city in what is now one of the dreariest sections of the East Bronx. Colonel Lewis Morris once wrote of his city: “As New England, excepting some Families, was ye scum of ye old, so the greatest part of the English in the Province [New York] is ye scum of ye New.” The Morrises were, in fact, the only New York family not “in trade.” As for the other prosperous families of the city, they were all required to work for a living. The Roosevelts, Bayards, Van Cortlandts, and Rhinelanders were in the sugar-refining business. The Rhinelanders also sold crockery, and the Schuylers were importers. The Verplancks were traders, and Clarksons and Beekmans and Van Zandts were in the retail dry-

goods business. Brevoorts and Goelets were ironmongers, and the Schermerhorns were ship chandlers.

Small, wistful newspaper advertisements of the period reveal how humbly the founding fathers of the great old New York families urged the public to buy their wares: Peter Goelet, from his shop in Hanover Street, begs customers to buy his saddles and pewter spoons and announces that he has received “a consignment of playing cards.” Jacob Astor—before he became John Jacob—offers “guitars, fifes and pianofortes” from his shop in Queen Street, while Isaac Roosevelt extols the virtues of his “loaf, lump, and strained sugar and sugar-house treacle.”

Such social life as existed among these folk depended largely on the weather, and when it was balmy and fair, New York society sat outside their front doors on wooden benches and nodded and chatted with their neighbors across the way. Picnics in the wooded hills of mid-town Manhattan were also popular, as were boating jaunts to Brooklyn. There were hunting and fishing parties for well-connected young men on the banks of the Harlem River and, in winter, frequent skating parties for both sexes on a Hudson which, in those naïve days before pollutants, often froze from Manhattan to the New Jersey shore. When society entertained, it did so with seriousness. As Washington Irving humorously commented, “These fashionable parties were generally confined to the higher classes, or noblesse, that is to say, such as kept their own cows, and drove their own wagons. The company commonly assembled at three o’clock, and went away about six, unless it was in winter time, when the fashionable hours were a little earlier, that the ladies might get home before dark.” Social life certainly seems to have been a barren and bleak affair. As Frederika Bremer wrote, “Here, where almost every person works for a living, one cannot properly speak of a working class, but quite correctly of people of small means and somewhat limited environment and circumstances—a *class which has not yet worked itself up.*”

To the people living in New York, it was something else again. Many New Yorkers actually considered themselves quite racy. In fusty Boston and austere Charleston, for instance, society never dined in public. But in New York society had discovered the restaurant, and the fashionable gathered at Niblo’s and Delmonico’s for dinners and even floor shows. The daring drank wine, and the less daring mixed a little wine with their milk.

In upstate New York such old patroon families as the Van Rensselaers—Stephen Van Rensselaer in 1838 was said to have an income of a million dollars a year—made periodic excursions to their city houses, leaving their stamp on social life. The Van Rensselaers, said James Silk Buckingham, “give a great gravity and decorum to the general tone of society here. There is less of show in houses, carriages, and horses; less of ceremony and etiquette in visiting; very early hours for meals; seven for breakfast, two for dinner, and six for tea; plainer and more simple fare.” The plainness and the decorum, however, did not delight an English visitor of the period, Margaret Hunter, who wrote home after a dinner party at Mrs. Van Rensselaer’s that she found all the guests “exceedingly commonplace,” and was “amused with the motley company we meet here, Senators, lawyers, actors, editors of newspapers, one of them a Jew, all placed indiscriminately at table and all joining equally in the conversation.” Still, such as it was, it was New York society, and August Belmont determined to join it and to help it “work itself up.”

Though there was no explicit anti-Semitism in New York at the time, it was generally considered “better”—among such families as the Roosevelts, Van Rensselaers, Goelets, and Morrises—not to be Jewish. Yet there was, at the same time, a distinct Jewish upper class, composed of families who had been in the city even longer than some of the leading gentiles.

The first recorded Jewish settler in Manhattan was a man named Jacob Barsimson who arrived early in 1654. He was an Ashkenazic, or German, Jew. No one knows what happened to Mr. Barsimson, and his importance to history has been eclipsed by the arrival, somewhat later that same year, of twenty-three Jewish immigrants aboard the bark *St. Charles*, often called “the Jewish *Mayflower*.” The *St. Charles* had carried its passengers from Recife, Brazil, but actually the little band’s journey had begun thousands of miles farther away and years before in fifteenth-century Spain and Portugal. There, after the violence of the Inquisition—and, by a prophetic coincidence, in the same year that Columbus discovered the New World—the Catholic monarchs had ordered all Jews to adopt Christianity or depart the Iberian Peninsula. Those who would not convert had fled and scattered—to Italy, Turkey, Hamburg, and to various Baltic ports. Many had been drawn to the tolerant atmosphere of the Netherlands, and when the Dutch conquered Recife in 1630 and urged settlers to go to the new possession and

form colonies, many Jews had migrated to South America, where they found a few years' peace. But in 1654 Recife had been reconquered by the Portuguese, and Brazil was no longer safe for Jews. They fled once more. The *St. Charles* passengers were on the last stage of an exodus of the ancient Sephardic culture from medieval Spain.

In the unwritten hierarchy of world Jewry, the Sephardim are considered, and consider themselves, the most noble of all Jews because, as a culture, they claim the longest unbroken history of unity and suffering. The arrival of twenty-three Sephardim in New Amsterdam was not auspicious. When he discovered they were penniless, Governor Peter Stuyvesant threw the lot of them in prison. There they might have stayed, but, fortunately for them, many stockholders of the Dutch West India Company were Jewish and so Stuyvesant was persuaded to release the twenty-three on the condition that "the poor among them" be no burden and "be supported by their own nation." Within a year most had established themselves as merchants, trading in tobacco, fish, and furs, though they were not admitted as freemen until the next century. As a group, the Sephardim were proud, diligent, but an aloof and somewhat crusty people, and they were once labeled "the obstinate and immovable Jews."

The great Sephardic families of New York, many of them descended from the *St. Charles* arrivals, include the Hendrickses, the Cardozos, the Baruchs, the Lazaruses, the Nathans, the Solises, the Gomezes, the Lopezes, the Lindos, the Lombrosos, and the Seixases. By the beginning of the nineteenth century a number of the Sephardim had become quite wealthy. Old Harmon Hendricks, for instance, had a copper store in Mill Street (now South William Street) and a factory in New Jersey which was the first copper-rolling mill in the country. He died in the 1840's, according to one report, "immensely rich, leaving over three millions of dollars" and a great deal of valuable real estate. His daughter was married to Benjamin Nathan, a stockbroker in Wall Street, and, in fact, Hendricks copper shares were considered among the blue chips of the era. In *The Old Merchants of New York City*, published in the 1860's, Joseph A. Scoville reported that

With all the revulsions [sic] in trade, the credit of the [Hendricks] house has never been questioned, either in this country or in Europe, and today in Wall Street, their obligations would sell quite as readily as

government securities bearing the same rates of interest. No man stood higher in this community while he lived, and no man has left a memory more revered than Harmon Hendricks. When he died, the synagogue which he attended lost one of its best friends, and the rising generation of that numerous family could not have a better example.

Elsewhere the Jews were regarded with a similar admiration and respect and, because they were still relatively few in number,* with curious interest. In 1817, when a watchmaker named Joseph Jonas became the first Jew to settle in Cincinnati, one report says:

He was a curiosity at first, as many in that part of the country had never seen a Jew before. Numbers of people came from the country round about to see him, and he related in his old age of an old Quakeress who said to him, “Art thou a Jew? Thou art one of God’s chosen people. Wilt thou let me examine thee?” She turned him round and round, and at last exclaimed: “Well, thou art no different to other people.”

In New York the Sephardic families and their temple, Shearith Israel, had a distinct and special status. Many of their men had fought on the side of the colonists in the American Revolution, and as merchants and bankers they had helped finance the war and provision and outfit its armies. Haym Solomon, who had come from Poland, worked closely with William Morris and the Continental Congress as a broker, and helped raise a particularly large sum for the Revolution. For his services he was given the official title of “Broker to the Office of Finance.” Even earlier, Jewish bankers had lent money to Lord Bellamont, a particularly improvident eighteenth-century colonial Governor of New York, helping to keep the colony financially on its feet, and New York’s first Lutheran church was built with money advanced by Jewish bankers—among them Isaac Moses, who helped establish the Bank of North America in 1781.

But by the beginning of the nineteenth century the complexion of the Jewish community in New York had begun to change. German Jews had begun to trickle in. At first, the Germans were taken into the established Sephardic congregation, intermarried with the Sephardim, and adopted the Sephardic ritual, which had already become quite Americanized. But, as the

German migration grew, it became increasingly difficult for the Sephardim to accept the Germans. As Charles Bernheimer has said, “The small Sephardic communities, in defence of their own individuality, could not, and, by reason of their hidalgo pride would not, continue to absorb the new element. On the other hand, the prominent, useful individuals of the German section felt the propriety of devoting themselves to the needs of their countrymen.” This was part of it. There was also a matter of “native American” versus “foreigner” and, more than anything, a matter of class. The Sephardim had become successful businessmen and—to their way of thinking, certainly—sophisticated and cultivated city dwellers. The Germans, on the other hand, particularly after the fall of Napoleon in 1815 and the beginning of European reaction, were for the most part poor, soiled-looking, and underfed. Most of them were arriving, like Joseph Seligman, in steerage. When they could manage the language at all, they spoke English with heavy and guttural accents. Most had had little education. They seemed uncultivated, and—because they were poor-aggressive. They were an embarrassment. The Sephardim were merchants and bankers; the Germans were going off as foot peddlers. And so by 1837 the doors of the Sephardim—and of Temple Shearith Israel—were closing to Germans. August Belmont, *né* Schönberg, may, with his usual acuity, have realized this also. His quick and complete apostasy—and his determination to climb into the gentile society of the Morrises and Mrs. Van Rensselaer—may be explained by the fact that the best class of Jews in New York would not have asked him to *their* picnics, hunts, and parties.

The first thing New York society noticed about August Belmont was that he had lots of money. It was Rothschild money, to be sure, but he used it lavishly. As a financier with the funds of the world’s largest private bank at his fingertips, he was immediately important not only to American companies but to the United States Government, which was always running out of cash and whose credit needed constant infusions from bankers. August Belmont became a figure, both as a host and as a guest, at New York parties. He spoke some Italian, a little Spanish, a little French, and all three languages with an atrocious accent, but nobody in New York knew the difference. It was exciting to hear him drop phrases in foreign tongues, and he was admired for his handkissing “Continental manner.” (New York society regarded anything European as synonymous with elegance.) August

Belmont could by no means have been considered handsome. He was short and rather stout, with iron-colored side whiskers. His features were round and Germanic, but his eyes were arresting—small, but astonishingly black and bright. Yet they were evasive eyes, which never looked directly at a person and seemed forever focused on some object in the middle distance.*

For all this, there was something about him that caused women to have impure thoughts—a hard-to-define but vaguely titillating vulgarity. Meeting a woman, those jet-black eyes would, fall to rest upon that curve below her throat and appear to be defrocking her, crinoline by crinoline, from that point downward. At the same time, his cynical manner and harsh, bitter tongue, along with his clear reluctance to reveal his past, made him a figure of mystery and glamour. It was whispered that he had insatiable sexual appetites, and was a cruel and demanding lover. It began to be rumored that the Rothschilds “had a reason” for wanting Belmont out of Europe. To what hideous Rothschild secret was he privy? There had to be something. Why, if he was their “representative,” was his new banking house not called N. M. Rothschild & Sons rather than August Belmont & Company? The unfounded rumor started—and is still heard today—that Belmont was actually an illegitimate Rothschild son.

The men did not take to him quite so much as the ladies did. Still, they knew it was wise to listen to him, and so he went everywhere and met everyone. He announced himself to be an epicure, and was perhaps the first person in New York to make the serving of good food fashionable. His own dinner invitations to Delmonico’s assumed priority over all others. In the early days, to be sure, no one quite knew where he lived. (Some said he slept in his office.) And men who had accepted his hospitality and eaten his food began to say to their wives afterward, “For God’s sake, don’t introduce that man Belmont to our daughters!”

But it would be to no avail. For the next fifty years New York society would dance to whatever tune August Belmont chose to play.

* There were probably less than one thousand Jews in America by the end of the eighteenth century.

* An animator for the Disney studios in California told the author that he had modeled the character of the evil coachman in *Pinocchio* on a portrait of August Belmont.

ON THE ROAD

There was no society in Mauch Chunk to distract Joseph Seligman, even if he had been able to afford its pleasures. Mauch Chunk isn't much of a town today, and it was less in 1837, when Joseph arrived.* But Joseph took to the town, and his work with Asa Packer, with gusto. Packer, a dozen years older than Joseph, became Joseph's tutor and protector.

The Yankee Packer's affection for Joseph was understandable. Jewish immigrants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had found themselves treated with special friendliness by people from New England. New England Puritanism, with its literal interpretation of the Old Testament, was a sort of neo-Judaism—a Judaism translated into Anglo-Saxon terms. The Puritans coming to America had identified themselves with the Israelites in search of the Promised Land, and King George III was equated with the Pharaoh. They called the new land Canaan and frequently referred to the Covenant they had made with God. Early in New England the Hebrew language became a major subject taught in colleges, and even secondary schools. To refer to a fellow New Englander as “a good Jew” was to pay him the highest compliment; it meant that he was pious and industrious; it had nothing to do with his blood or his religion. New England parents gave their children Old Testament names—Moses, Joshua, Abraham, and so on. New England Protestantism was considered an outgrowth, or extension, of Judaism, and New England preachers spoke continually of Zion and Jerusalem, of “the God of Israel” and “the God of Jacob.”

The Puritans were also convinced that the second coming and final judgment were at hand, and knew, as an article of faith, that the conversion of the Jews would precede these cataclysmic events. It had become a New

England tradition to cherish the people who would play such an important role in Puritan salvation, and to encourage their conversion. This lingering belief that Jews were worthy of special respect and honor would stand them in good stead when they began to enter the financial community of Wall Street, a world whose dominant figures were men whose roots extended back to Puritan New England.

At the end of the first year Packer wanted to raise Joseph's salary to \$500 a year, but Joseph, who had managed to save \$200, was anxious to go out on his own. Reluctantly, Packer let him go.

During his stay in Mauch Chunk Joseph had noticed that men and women from outlying farms made occasional, and laborious, wagon trips to market in the town. He had also made note of the things people bought. His theory was that for the convenience of having goods brought to their doors farm families would be willing to pay a bit more than the prices charged in town, miles away. With his savings, he bought some merchandise—small jewelry, some watches, rings, and knives—and, with a pack, set off on foot, peddling his wares through rural Pennsylvania. Within six months he had put aside \$500, enough to send passage to his two next oldest brothers, William and James, who, back in Baiersdorf, itched to join him.

They were a strange-looking lot, the three Seligman brothers and peddlers like them—bearded, shaggy-headed, their faces dusty from the road, in long ill-fitting coats and baggy trousers, walking in mud-caked shoes, with a shuffling gait, stooped under their packs—but how they looked didn't matter to them. They carried sticks to ward off dogs, and they had to endure children who came running out after them crying, "Jew! Sheeny! Christ-killer!" Boys pelted them with handfuls of gravel, sticks, and green apples, and leaped at them to pull their beards or knock off their hats. They shuffled on with their dreams bottled inside them, driven by a furious singleness of purpose—to make money. At night they slept in open fields, under their coats, with a pack for a lumpy pillow. In return for a few chores a farmer might let a peddler sleep in his barn. A true bed was a luxury and baths were rare. Keeping the dietary laws was an impossibility. Yet the Seligman boys always assured old David, in their letters home, that the laws were being faithfully kept.

Joseph's selling theory was a simple one: "Sell anything that can be bought cheaply, sold quickly at a little profit, small enough to place inside a

pack and light enough to carry.” The boys sold bolts of woolen and cotton cloth, lace trimmings, velvet ribbons, thread, men’s handkerchiefs and undershirts, women’s shawls, sashes, tablecloths, napkins, pins, needles, bobbins, buttons, thimbles, shoehorns, and cheap spectacles. Their packs weighed from one to two hundred pounds.

If an item was needed in an area, the boys were willing to walk to a town where it was available, buy it, and bring it back. A local store had run out of tobacco. William Seligman walked twelve miles to another town where he traded a German silver ring, which he had bought for under a dollar, for a hundred penny cigars. He then walked twelve miles back and sold the cigars for four cents apiece. The 300 percent profit made it worth the walk. A peddlers’ grapevine, composed of men like themselves, kept peddlers informed of conditions in surrounding areas.

Joseph learned that “Newcastle disease” had infected the poultry flocks of a nearby village. He traded two yards of cotton print for a pair of healthy laying hens, and carried them there, clucking and flapping, one under each arm. He sold them at a tidy profit. As he grew to know his territory and customers, Joseph was also able to initiate a practice that made him a popular peddler. He extended a bit of credit here and there, and this was appreciated.

But the plain fact was that the peddling Seligmans didn’t care how they were treated (which would stand in contrast with their attitude in New York a few years later, when they would care very much). They took rebuffs and abuse on the road willingly because peddling was only a means to an end. By 1840 the three Seligman boys had realized part of this end: they had made enough money to rent a small building in Lancaster, which they used as headquarters for their peddling enterprises. In the front they opened a shop to display their wares. In the back they had beds to sleep in. It gave them their first real business address in America. In 1841 they sent passage home for a fourth brother, fourteen-year-old Jesse, to help them peddle and tend the store.

* In 1954, hoping to improve its prospects, Mauch Chunk renamed itself Jim Thorpe, after the famous athlete. The improved prospects failed to materialize and, ten years later, Jim Thorpe decided to change its name back to Mauch Chunk. It never considered calling itself Joe Seligman, and the

towns which did name themselves Seligman after Joseph and his kin have had no better luck than Mauch Chunk from tying in with a noted personage. Seligman, Missouri, had only 350 residents in 1880 when it stopped being Roller's Ridge and became Seligman, in honor of Joseph; its population is about 400 today. Seligman, Arizona, northwest of Phoenix, named after Jesse Seligman, is still an arid sheep-raising freight-division point on the Santa Fe, in the neighborhood of which live some 700 souls. A third Seligman, in White Pine County, Nevada, gave up long ago and no longer exists.

MRS. RANKIN'S GALOSHES

The store gave the Seligmans a warehouse for their goods. They could expand their line into larger, heavier, and more general merchandise—boots and overshoes, brooms, bustles, hardware, and bags of feed. They were graduating from foot peddlers to small-town merchants.

Joseph was a perfectionist, a stickler for rectitude, and had no patience with anything that smacked of wasted motion. He had the energy of an ox, and anyone less energetic infuriated him. But, as he became a businessman—with that important commodity, a place of business—a change began to come over him. He began to assume dignity. He acquired presence. He shaved his face smooth, and combed his fine head of silky, light-brown hair back in the slightest wave, revealing a fine, high forehead. He smelled of soap, pomade, and a better brand of cigars. As a ragged peddler, thrusting his goods with eager hands before skeptical farmers' wives, he had been a compulsive smiler. Now he smiled less, and his expression to the world at large became one of wise, fatherly tolerance. His presence did not inspire intimacy; it was not intended to. It was intended to inspire confidence and command respect.

William, next to Joseph in age, was a clever but overweight and rather lazy fellow. He loved to eat, and was—to Joseph's distinct displeasure—fond of wine. He also showed a penchant for young ladies; Joseph still considered women a waste of time and money. William fancied himself a wit, and was forever making jokes which left Joseph not amused. (None of William's famous "jokes" is recorded, and perhaps that is just as well; one prank, however, was to sneak up behind his brothers in the store and give them a playful kick in the pants.) As a businessman William was somewhat

devil-may-care. Joseph examined William's accounts with more than the usual amount of scrutiny. In years to come this was to prove a wise practice.

The third brother, James, was not particularly good with figures. Little discrepancies—not through guile, but through oversight—turned up in James's accounts. But James was handsome, the best-looking of the boys, and affable—and a born salesman. He used to boast that he could sell umbrellas on the Gobi Desert, and though he kept a poor ledger, he loved the feel and jingle of money in his pockets. As a result, his peddling profits often topped the other boys'—even Joseph's own—which placed James high in Joseph's esteem. Though still a teen-ager (which Joseph considered too young for such interests), James had lady friends in Lancaster whom he squired around. Joseph scolded William for his interest in women, but forgave it in James.

Unlike James, Jesse *was* good with figures. Though barely fourteen, Jesse had the audacity to point out niggling errors in Joseph's book-keeping. No matter how hard Joseph tried to shape his brothers into an efficient working unit, the four spent a certain amount of time wrangling and shouting at one another. Joseph, the worrier and account-keeper, often accused the other three of not taking the business, or themselves, as seriously as he did.

Soon after the Lancaster store was opened, young James came to Joseph with a selling idea. Pennsylvania was in danger of becoming overpeddled. James wanted money to buy a horse and wagon which could carry more goods and take him farther afield—to the South where, James had heard along the grapevine, things were considerably better, where people were crying “Cotton is King!” and a slave economy was making men wealthy.

Joseph, who tended automatically to resist suggestions from the younger boys, reportedly replied, “What do I say? I say *chutzpah!* Horse and wagon indeed! What are your feet for?”

James persisted. A horse and wagon, as he put it, would give the Seligmans “a traveling store.”

Joseph was adamant. James might be a good salesman, but he still needed more experience in selling before embarking on such a venture. While he and Joseph were arguing, James later remembered, a certain Mrs. Rankin, the wife of a local grocer, came into the store. Mrs. Rankin's entrance was a pivotal event in the Seligmans' business history.

It was a warm and lovely summer day. James pulled Joseph aside and whispered, “If I can sell her a pair of winter galoshes, will you let me go?”

Joseph, who found it hard to refuse a wager, hesitated, then shrugged and nodded. James hurried out to wait on Mrs. Rankin, who was looking for a few yards of cotton print.

“Pretty bad storm coming, Mrs. Rankin,” James said. “You’ll need a pair of warm galoshes.”

“Storm?” she asked. “Really, Jim? How can you tell?”

“I can feel it in my bones, Mrs. Rankin. My bones never lie. A bad storm—snow and sleet. You’ll need galoshes.”

“Snow and sleet? In June?” She laughed. “Oh, Jim, you’re joking me!”

He gave her his best smile and said, “But you’ll need some good galoshes when winter comes, won’t you, Mrs. Rankin? Let me sell you a nice pair.”

“Oh, all right!” she laughed. “Jim Seligman, you are a caution!”

“Ill have them for you within a week,” he said.

After Mrs. Rankin left, Joseph was stern. “James,” he said, “I want you to remember never to make misstatements in order to make a sale. What you did was clever and amusing, but don’t go too far. We want to keep our reputation for honest dealings.”

Years later, however, James Seligman would give this bit of advice to his sons and grandsons: “To sell something you have to someone who wants it—that is not business. But to sell something you don’t have to someone who doesn’t want it—*that* is business!”

As the first mobilized Seligman, James set off on a wide-swinging tour of the American South. In a surprisingly short time he was back, and spread his profits on the table before his brothers’ wondering eyes—\$1,000 or, as James remembered later, “more than either of my brothers had earned.” Jesse, however, looking over the figures, noticed that James had forgotten to deduct the cost of the horse and wagon, which made the profit only about \$800. Still, it was an imposing sum. As Jesse wrote later, “We concluded to take the advice of this purse-proud Nabob—that we would better our condition by removing to that section of the country.”

In the fall of 1841 the four boys pulled up stakes in Lancaster and, with \$5,000 worth of merchandise which took nearly all their joint capital, set

out for New York, where they boarded a schooner for Mobile. The trip took them six weeks and almost cost them their lives. A storm hit the ship and nearly sank it—for several days it was officially reported as lost—but when the boys finally reached Mobile, they were in good enough health to set up an open-air tent to display their wares.

But soon they were quarreling again. James, pointing to the new profits, took a perhaps understandable attitude of I-told-you-so. Feeling that he had “discovered” the South, he began to argue that he should direct the Seligmans’ Southern operations, which did not sit well with Joseph, who complained that the profits were not what he had expected. Joseph’s little organization seemed on the verge of falling apart.

Then a letter arrived from Baiersdorf. The redoubtable Fanny had died. Mournfully, old David also said that his woolen business was in such a state that he could no longer afford to keep the seven motherless children in Germany.

Joseph quickly took charge. They must bring the remaining Seligmans to America. The boys pooled their resources and sent \$2,000 to Baiersdorf, and early in 1842 a small band of Seligmans prepared to cross the Atlantic. Led by Babette, who was twenty, and Rosalie, fifteen, were ten-year-old Leopold, eight-year-old Abraham, seven-year-old Isaac, and baby Sarah, who was two. Old David, who had watched with dismay while his oldest sons left one by one, watched these six leave with resignation. He had chosen one last son, thirteen-year-old Henry, to remain as his helper. James headed North to meet his brothers and sisters in New York, to find rooms for them all in Grand Street, and to see that the younger ones were enrolled in school to learn English—a prerequisite for any American enterprise. When news came from Baiersdorf that old David’s woolen business had failed completely, Joseph wrote back assuring his father’s creditors that his debts would eventually be paid. The last Seligmans to arrive on these shores, in 1843, were old David and Henry.

David Seligman seemed dazed by the New World, confused by what his sons were doing. He tried to follow their far-off wanderings through tiny Alabama towns with queer names—Frisco City, Gosport, Suggsville, Gees Bend. It seemed clear to him that they had become hoboes or, even worse, beggars. Though the boys sent money regularly to New York, David could not believe that they were earning it honestly. David died in New York,

barely two years after his arrival, certain the Baiersdorf Seligmans had come a long way down in the world.

Today David's bones reside in the Seligman mausoleum in the Salem Fields Cemetery of Temple Emanu-El, in Brooklyn. The mausoleum, a vast marble edifice in the Byzantine style, is now the home of over forty Seligmans, whose names occupy places of varying luster in American financial, philanthropic, and social history; and who, though they may have had their differences, now lie united and presumably at peace. Nearby stands the Guggenheim mausoleum, which is larger (some say "showier"), but, as the Seligmans point out, the Seligman mausoleum commands the finer view. And, since these mausoleums are maintained by trusts which control considerable funds, the Seligmans say, "Our mausoleum usually does a little better on the market."

ON TO THE CITY

The arrival of all those additional Seligmans turned out to be providential for the four peddling brothers. The extra mouths to feed not only made them peddle harder; the new arrivals also forced them to settle their differences. They were providers now, and, by remote control, householders. The boys in the South now had a strong emotional tie with New York. They began making frequent trips North—always to buy goods, but also to check on the group in Grand Street. If it had not been for the children, the brothers might have continued the profitable but humble business of wandering through Alabama, peddling, setting up shops by the side of the road, and moving on. The influx of children gave them a new sense of purpose.

In their earliest Alabama days their shops had been set up under tents or in the open air. In Birmingham an old spreading tree near the center of town is known as “the Seligman tree.” Today no one knows why, but it is one of many trees under which the boys spread their goods. But soon after the children arrived, the boys rented three permanent buildings in villages outside Selma and opened dry-goods stores—one in Greensboro, one in Eutaw, and one in Clinton.* Now they were small chain-store operators. They hired their first clerks. They continued to peddle a bit, but now most of their time was spent buying. In New York Babette and Rosalie ran up pairs of men’s work pants and rolled hems for handkerchiefs, and whenever a brother arrived in town, the girls presented him with armloads of handiwork for the Seligman stores.

As a peddler Joseph had been willing to take the jeers and slurs that went with the territory. But as a proprietor of three stores he was not. Selma apparently was no freer of bigotry in the 1840’s than it is today, and when a

Selma man made an anti-Semitic remark to Joseph, Joseph retaliated. Joseph was small-boned and short, and in the fight that ensued he got the worst of it. But he must have conducted himself well enough because the man pressed assault charges against him.

When the case came to trial, it became clear that the judge was also an anti-Semite. He made repeated references to Joseph as “this Jew,” “this foreigner,” and “this member of a so-called Chosen Race.” He found Joseph guilty, and was about to pronounce a prison sentence. It was probably the bleakest moment in Joseph’s life. Then a young man who had witnessed the fight, and knew its cause, stood up in the courtroom and spoke out for Joseph. The young man happened to be the son of an Alabama Supreme Court justice, and his words had weight. The judge reversed his decision, and Joseph was released. The Alabama jurist’s son—one of a growing list of importantly placed men the Seligmans would have the good fortune to stumble upon—was to enter the Seligmans’ lives at another crucial moment, later on.

In New York both Babette and Rosalie had met young men who now asked to marry them. Both were men of solid German Jewish stock—Babette’s was Max Stettheimer, and Rosalie’s was Morris Lehmaier (later changed to Lemaire). The girls excitedly wrote Joseph of these developments, but Joseph at first was not pleased. It seemed to him only another problem on top of all his others. Problems, in a family the size of the Seligmans, came several at a time. What would become of the other four children—Leopold, Abraham, Isaac, and baby Sarah? Joseph gave his consent only when the girls agreed to split the four smaller children between them. But when Babette’s wedding, the first of the two to occur, drew near, Joseph would send only one brother, James, North to attend it, and he gave James an additional assignment—to set up a New York store. James found a corner location in downtown Manhattan and rented it. “J. [for Joseph] Seligman & Brothers, Merchants” opened for business at No. 5 William Street in 1846.* At last the Seligmans were city folk, and right around the corner from Wall Street.

New York, at this time, was a town that still looked and sounded like a seaport. What is now the financial district was a long way from the maze of narrow, airless canyons between towers of granite and glass and steel that it is today. Instead, a fresh salt breeze blew across Bowling Green from the

bay and the Atlantic beyond, and the horizon was hectic with the masts of sailing vessels from foreign ports, and the streets were noisy with horses and wagons and men unloading cargo. The spirit of oceangoing commerce was everywhere. And—what would be a rarity today—one could actually see and smell the products that were making their way into the port: the bales of hides and fleece and sacks of wheat and flour from the opening West; cotton from the South; bars of copper from the Great Lakes; crates of poultry from upstate and New England; meats, vegetables, eggs, fish, timbers for railroad ties. Very soon bars of gold would be unloaded on the streets from California. Everything was out in the open air. Stocks were traded on street corners along with diamonds and foreign currency. New York *was* trade—there was virtually no other business. In this zesty atmosphere it was impossible for a young man not to smell the money to be made.

Babette's marriage gave Joseph his first brother-in-law, and Joseph put him promptly to use. Along with William, Max Stettheimer was sent to Saint Louis, where W. Seligman & Company was opened at 166 North Main Street. With stores in New York and Saint Louis, in addition to Greensboro, Clinton, and Eutaw, things were looking up again. Max Stettheimer's father, Jacob, was taken in, placed in the New York store, and in a short space of time Abraham Seligman—now fifteen and ready to work †—was shipped to St. Louis to assist William; Max Stettheimer was shipped back to New York to help his father, where the firm name was changed to Seligman & Stettheimer, Dry Goods Importers; Jesse and Henry were shifted out of Alabama to upstate New York, where, in Watertown, their new firm was called J. & H. Seligman, Dry Goods. (Jesse liked to say the "J." stood for Jesse, but anyone who knew Joseph knew that all J.'s really stood for Joseph.) In Watertown the Seligmans ran their first advertisement in the Watertown *Jeffersonian*, which announced:

SHAWLS! SHAWLS!!

200 ALL WOOL LONG SHAWLS of the Richest Colors and Latest Styles, just arrived and will be sold at prices which cannot fail to suit all purchasers. Brocha, Cashmere, and Silk Shawls we offer now at lower prices than ever heard of!

It was a chilly October morning, and the ladies came in droves.

In Watertown the Seligmans made another valuable friend. He was First Lieutenant Ulysses Simpson Grant of the 4th Infantry, who was stationed at Madison Barracks, eleven miles away, and who dropped into the Seligmans' store looking for "a bit of finery" for his new bride. Jesse waited on the sad-faced young Lieutenant and, as Jesse wrote later, "On our acquaintance we immediately became friends."

Probably Grant was looking for a new male friend his own age at that point. Most of his friends prior to that year had been made in taverns, and already his commanding officer had begun warning him about his drinking habits. His new wife was doing her best to steer him toward other forms of sociability. At her urging, he had helped form Rising Sun Division No. 210 of the Sons of Temperance Lodges in Watertown, had become presiding officer of the lodge, and often marched militantly in local temperance parades. In his off-duty, non-temperance-meeting hours, Grant began sitting around with pleasant, sober Jesse Seligman. The two played checkers, whist, and poker, chewed tobacco and smoked cigars. Grant hated to talk politics.

Rosalie was the sentimental Seligman sister. She doted on her husband and on married life in general, loving to perform such wifely tasks as polishing his shoes, brushing his hair, rubbing his back when he was weary, and nursing him when he was indisposed. She quickly became pregnant, bore him a daughter, wept that it wasn't the son he'd hoped for, and longed to be pregnant again. By the spring of 1848 Babette was pregnant, and Rosalie's world had become a rosy blur of cooking, house cleaning, medicines, motherhood, and obstetrics. She began to worry about her brothers' unmarried state—particularly Joseph, who was approaching thirty. Joseph, meanwhile, was busily making plans for his first trip back to Germany to buy more goods for his stores.

Rosalie began a secret correspondence with a Baiersdorf girl named Babet Steinhardt, who, Rosalie had decided, would be the perfect mate for Joseph. Babet was a first cousin—she was Fanny Seligman's brother's child—which made it seem all the cozier, and a match Fanny would certainly have approved. Rosalie filled her letters to Cousin Babet with rapturous details of Joseph's good looks, gentle nature, and money. And to Joseph Rosalie began dropping references to Babet's beauty, modesty, and

housekeeping skills. She suggested that he combine his business trip to Germany with a *Brautschau* (bride search), and hinted that, in view of his rapidly expanding operations, a time would come when he could no longer count on brothers and brothers-in-law to help him out; he would need sons. Joseph got the point. But he was annoyed at Rosalie for hammering Babet's virtues so tirelessly, and accused her of wanting to collect a marriage broker's commission.

When he got to Germany, however, he made a trip to Baiersdorf. Word of his affluence had spread, and there was a sizable welcoming committee on hand to meet him. He sought out all his father's creditors, paid them, and insisted on adding accumulated interest. He visited his mother's grave. And he met Babet Steinhardt. She was just twenty, and, to his surprise, Joseph found her quite as advertised. He married her in a *gemütlich* village ceremony and in November, 1848, started home with her—the first Seligman to travel to America in other than steerage class.

* For many years the Seligmans, and families like them, would show a preference for renting their places of business and their homes rather than buying them. This was not a reluctance to settle down. They remembered too well the futile attempts of Jews in Germany to buy land and the many instances where Jews had been summarily expelled from land they had thought they owned. The Seligmans would display this same reticence toward parcels of real estate when, not many years later, for an astonishingly low price that they could easily have afforded, they had a chance to buy one-sixth of Manhattan Island.

* On this corner, later renumbered One William Street, would eventually rise the ornate eleven-story headquarters of J. & W. Seligman & Company. This wedge-shaped building, topped by a Romanesque tower, is now a landmark of the financial district as—through the many ironies of financial fortune—the present home of Lehman Brothers.

† Where was Leopold, two years older than Abraham? Leopold was a slow-starting Seligman, and would prove to be something of a trial to Joseph as the years went by. Babette used to argue that Leopold was “artistic.”

MATTERS OF STATUS

It would become a question of some importance, later on in New York when the German Jewish crowd had crystallized around such families as the Seligmans, Lehmans, Guggenheims, Goldmans, Sachses, and Loebes, whether one's immigrant ancestor had "started with a wagon" or started on foot. It was nearly, though not quite, as important as how far back one could trace one's family history in Germany.

Which means of "starting" transportation was actually "better" would become a debatable point. On the one hand, starting on foot showed a certain physical stamina. Starting with a wagon, on the other hand, might indicate superior business acumen. Most Lehmans feel strongly that the Lehmans started with a wagon. One thing is certain. By 1844, when Henry Lehman arrived in Mobile, the wagon had become the fashionable means of peddling. With his wagon, then, he started north along the Alabama River and within a year had worked his way successfully to Montgomery.

The capital of Alabama, however, in those days was a town not much bigger than Rimpfing, Bavaria, where Henry had come from—four thousand population, to which Montgomery added two thousand slaves—but it was considerably less attractive. Montgomery was approached by planked roads which disintegrated into rutted, unpaved streets in the center of town. The streets turned into rivers of red mud in rainy weather, and the buildings were hastily erected frame affairs that leaned against each other and against a variety of livery stables. The livery-stable odor, and the swarms of flies it drew, pervaded Montgomery air, and between the buildings open sewers ran down to the river and its row of rickety piers, drawing more flies. Yellow fever was endemic. Rats the size of small dogs took charge of the streets at night. The only buildings of any consequence in Montgomery were three

pretentious hotels—the Exchange Hotel, the Madison House, and the Dexter House—built by speculators whose faith in Montgomery’s future as a cotton capital had been supreme. At the time of Henry Lehman’s arrival these dreams had not yet materialized and the hotels stood largely empty.

For all its unappetizing appearance and unhealthy climate, Montgomery was a prospering town. Its location on the banks of the Alabama linked it to the ports of both Mobile and New Orleans, and made it a natural warehouse and trading center from which the flourishing cotton trade could radiate. Henry Lehman rented a small building in Commerce Street and spread his stock of merchandise on wooden shelves—crocery, glassware, tools, dry goods, bagging, and seeds. With a hand-painted shingle that read “H. Lehman,” the Lehman name entered the annals of American enterprise. Henry lived in a room behind his shop, working late at night over his account books by the light of a whale-oil lamp, doing what Joseph Seligman had done, saving money to send home for more brothers. It was a lonely, celibate existence—in Montgomery Henry became known as “our little monk”—and in the quiet hours he began to fear for his own health. “There is money to be made here,” he wrote to Germany, “if the Fever doesn’t get me first.” Within two years he was able to send for his next-younger brother, Emanuel, and by 1850 Mayer, the youngest, had joined him. The offices of the firm, now called Lehman Brothers, stood in Court Square in the heart of town, directly opposite Montgomery’s main slave-auctioning block. The Lehmans were listed in the city directory as “grocers,” but they advertised themselves as “Agents for the Sale of Leading Southern Domestic”—from which it should not be inferred that the Lehmans sold slaves (though they were eventually prosperous enough to buy a few). “Domestics,” in the cotton business, referred to “osnaburgs, sheetings, shirtings, yarn, cotton rope, and ball thread.” They were, in other words, cotton brokers.

The Guggenheims are proud to say that they started on foot and, so doing, amassed what may have been the greatest single fortune in America. The only fortune that may outweigh the Guggenheims’ is that of John D. Rockefeller. It seems senseless to quibble. The Guggenheims became immensely rich. But one of the great “problems” with the Guggenheims, socially, in New York had less to do with their foot-borne origins and their

wealth than with their curious proclivity for surrounding themselves with scandal. Several Guggenheim men have had the misfortune of dying on the doorsteps of strange ladies' houses, or of becoming involved in spectacular breach-of-promise suits.

Records place Guggenheims in Lengnau in Canton Aargau in German-speaking northern Switzerland, as early as 1696—a document of that year refers to “*der Jud' Maran Guggenheimb von Lengnau*”—and the family had probably come to Lengnau from a German town called Guggenheimb (now Jugenheim), near Heidelberg. Whether some controversy prompted the family's move from Germany to Switzerland is unknown, but by the 1740's the Guggenheims of Lengnau were involved in a scandal that shook the foundations of Jewish communities in two countries.

It started with a visit to Lengnau by a young Swiss divine named Johann Casper Ulrich, pastor of the Cathedral of the Holy Virgin in Zurich, a Protestant cathedral despite its name. An earnest, scholarly man, Ulrich had become interested in rabbinical studies and Jewish culture while a seminary student. He had come to Lengnau (this town and the neighboring village of Endingen were the ghettos of Switzerland) because he had heard of a certain Jakob Guggenheim, a *parnas*, or elder of the synagogue, and a *lamden*, or scholar. Pastor Ulrich was a great admirer of the Jews. (He later published a *Collection of Jewish Narratives*, one of the first books written by a Christian of the era which portrayed Jewish life with sympathy.) The pastor met the *parnas*, and the two got along very well. Jakob Guggenheim took the pastor into his home, and the two spent long afternoons discussing Jewish history and arguing religious theory. But it soon became apparent that Pastor Ulrich's main interest in the Jews was in converting them.

Ulrich made no headway with Jakob Guggenheim, who took the pastor's proselytizing efforts with good humor, but Ulrich noticed that he had a more interested listener in Jakob's young son, Joseph.

Joseph was brilliant, sensitive, and high-strung. He had been educated at a Talmudic academy, and loved theological debate. Ulrich knew that in order to work on Joseph he would have to get him away from his father, and so he persuaded Jakob—and the Swiss authorities—to let Joseph come and live with him in Zurich, a city that was open to Jews only during certain hours of the day. Why did the *parnas* let his son go? Perhaps he was

flattered by the pastor's interest. Surely he did not think that his son was susceptible to conversion.

In Zurich, Ulrich flooded the boy with pamphlets from Halle, Germany, the center of Protestant missions to convert the Jews, and gave him a copy of the New Testament printed in Yiddish. As the boy began to waver, Ulrich's pressure upon him grew more intense. When the youth burst into tears, the pastor would fling him to his knees and try to force him into an ecstasy of prayer. The atmosphere of the Ulrich home had become hysterical when Joseph Guggenheim suddenly suffered a complete mental collapse. He recovered, then suffered another.

The Ulrich-Guggenheim conversion effort grew into one of the longest on record. It lasted sixteen years. Finally Joseph announced his decision—perhaps consent is the better word—to be baptized, and, amid much prayer and weeping by both pastor and convert, the ceremony was performed. The Christian faith had gained a soul but a sadly broken man.

It was agreed that Joseph's conversion should be kept a secret from the Jewish community at Lengnau, and for two years it was. Then it leaked out, and the Jews of Lengnau reacted violently. They accused their former pastor friend of conspiracy and of violating their hospitality, as, indeed, he had done. Ulrich retaliated with accusations of his own, claiming that Joseph's mental illness had been induced by the Jews as a tactic to prevent him from accepting Christianity, and charging that the Jews now "conspired to murder" Joseph, preferring a dead Christian to a live one. The battle over Joseph Guggenheim's soul erupted into all the Jewish and Christian journals of the day, spread across the Swiss border into Germany, where at least six rabbis issued blistering pronouncements against Ulrich. Two successive governors of Baden and nearly all the high officials of Zurich were drawn into the controversy. Eventually, the pastor was conceded to have won, and soon after that the disputed soul departed for the heaven of its choice. It must have been the Christian heaven. The name Joseph Guggenheim was expunged from the Guggenheim family tree.

Joseph's brother Isaac Guggenheim, meanwhile, was proving himself a more solid and less emotional sort. Isaac was a Lengnau moneylender, and he became quite rich. As an old man he was a patriarchal figure—grave, bearded, in kaftan and skullcap, surrounded by his hovering and attentive family, moving grandly through the streets or sitting in state in his house

where he received petitioners for loans. An indication of his stern and frosty manner is the fact that old Isaac became known locally as “Old Icicle.” From him, all the American Guggenheims descend. When “Old Icicle” died in 1807, his estate consisted of an enormous trunk. When this was ceremoniously opened, it was found to contain 830 gold and silver coins, plus all the articles Isaac had accepted, over the years, as collateral on loans: 72 plates, a mortar, a frying pan, two kneading pans, a Sabbath lamp, “a ewer with basin for washing hands,” a brass coffee pot, 4 featherbeds, 19 sheets, 15 towels, 8 nightshirts, and a child’s chamber pot. The valuation of this estate was placed at 25,000 florins, which was quite a nice sum.

“Old Icicle” Guggenheim had many children; his oldest son was named Meyer, who married and had eight children, four boys and four girls, and soon one of these sons, Samuel, was making a name for himself. The typewritten translation of the following news item, with its erratic spelling and mixed tenses, now hangs in the partners’ room at Guggenheim Brothers in New York:

Samuel Guggenheim

On the 25th of July, 1818, fire broke out in Wyle, in the Canton of Zurich. A whole house soon enveloped in flames, and made the hurriedly arrived people shudder. But, oh! two peacefully sleeping children were still within the building. The cries of anguish of the congregated populace of the town and the cracking of the flames and smoke woke the little ones from their sweet slumber, apparently only to die the sleep of death. Who can command the flames? Who can save the little ones? A Hebrew, Samuel Guggenheim of Largan [Lengnau], Canton Aargan [Aargau], Switzerland, a man full of presence of mind and honest courage, rushed into the blazing house, grasps [grabs? grasps?] both children and carries them triumphantly through the terrible heat and smoke to safety.

But, oh! Even more thrilling exploits would the Guggenheims carry out. Equal to their ability to stir up controversy is their love of drama.

Samuel’s older brother was Simon. By Samuel’s and Simon’s generation, the considerable competence that Old Icicle had left behind him was spent and gone, and the Guggenheims were poor again. Simon was the village

tailor, and hardly saw a florin enter his shop from one week to the next. With its maze of restrictions and special taxes, life for the ghetto Jew in Switzerland was onerous anyway, but for the poor man it was hideous. Households in the Lengnau-Endingen townships were limited by decree in 1776 to the then existing figure—108—and Jews were not permitted to enlarge or alter the exteriors of their houses. To escape the tax collector, families hid with other families. Householders received expulsion orders frequently, and the only way to avoid eviction was to renew—for a price—the “Safe-Conduct and Patronage Letter.” As early as 1840 Simon Guggenheim, a small, thin, intense man with a haggard face and brooding eyes, had begun dreaming of escaping to America. But he had a wife and five children—a son, Meyer, and, disappointingly, four girls—and he simply could not afford it. Then his wife died.

Good fortune now stepped in. In 1846, when Simon was in his fifties, another death in Lengnau created a forty-one-year-old widow, Rachel Meyer. Rachel had seven children—three sons and four daughters—and she also had a little money. Simon married her, and late in 1847 the combined families—fourteen in all—set off for America. Their ship took the customary two months to cross the Atlantic, entered the mouth of the Delaware River in 1848, and deposited them all in Philadelphia. Simon was then fifty-six; his son Meyer was twenty. Father and son set off peddling into the anthracite country, as the Seligman brothers had done a decade before.

Meyer Guggenheim was short and slender, but well-knit and handsome. That a shipboard romance could have blossomed under steerage conditions of filth, suffocation, and darkness seems strange, but it did. Crossing the ocean, Meyer had fallen in love with his stepmother’s fifteen-year-old daughter, Barbara. She has been described in the family as a beauty with “unusually fair skin,” “eyes that were brown in some lights and soft warm gray in others,” and “auburn hair that burned in the sun.” Barbara’s auburn hair burned in young Meyer’s mind as he peddled the dreary mining towns of northeastern Pennsylvania. He married his stepsister in 1852 in Philadelphia.

But as a peddler Meyer Guggenheim made a discovery which, in the beginning, eluded men like the Seligmans and Lehmans, and which turned his career in a different direction. He realized that for every dollar’s worth

of goods sold he was returning sixty to seventy cents to the manufacturer. In other words, he was working two-thirds of each peddling day for manufacturers and only one-third for himself. Meyer began to consider ways in which he could reverse this situation. "Obviously," says Milton Lomask, a Guggenheim biographer, "he must put something of himself into one of his products. But which one?"

With considerable wisdom, he decided to concentrate on the one product about which he had received the most complaints. This was a certain brand of stove polish. Housewives had told him that the polish did a fine job on their stoves, but that it also soiled and burned their hands. Meyer took the polish to a chemist friend, asked him to analyze it and, if possible, to isolate the soiling and burning ingredient from the cleaning and polishing agent. The chemist analyzed the polish, suggested a new formula, and presently Guggenheim's stingless, stainless stove polish was offered to the ladies on Meyer's route. It was a success. Meyer's father, Simon, was now in his sixties and getting too old to peddle, and so Meyer took him off the peddling route and assigned him to the house to brew up vats of stove polish. The business ethics of taking an existing product, changing it slightly, and selling it under another label are best left to a patent attorney. There was no Better Business Bureau in those days, anyway. By a similar process, Meyer soon added Guggenheim's bluing and Guggenheim's lye to his household-products line.

The two families who would compose Goldman, Sachs started not only on foot but, romantically enough, as runaways. Young Joseph Sachs was a scholarly son of a poor Bavarian saddlemaker who grew up in a village outside Würzburg. As a lad in his teens he was hired as tutor in the home of a wealthy Würzburg goldsmith named Baer to teach the Baers' beautiful young daughter, Sophia. In a fairy-tale way, the poor young tutor and the lovely young merchant princess fell in love. Naturally her parents disapproved. So the couple eloped to Rotterdam, were married there in 1848, and that same year boarded a boat for America, landing in Baltimore. Where the money came from that financed the elopement and the schooner crossing is not clear. Very likely Sophia, a practical girl, pocketed some of her father's gold before departing.

In that same pivotal year twenty-seven-year-old Marcus Goldman, a more down-to-earth sort, arrived in New York. He was also a Bavarian, born in a small village, Burgpreppach, near Schweinfurt, and he quickly set off for the area that, rightly or wrongly, young German Jewish immigrants had heard was the peddlers' paradise, the coal hills of Pennsylvania. In 1848 another girl from Bavaria, named Bertha Goldman—of another Goldman family—had arrived in America to join her already migrated relatives in Philadelphia. She was nineteen. In Philadelphia Miss Goldman and Mr. Goldman met, fell in love, and were married. The Goldman-Goldman union was to become remarkable in New York's German Jewish crowd for the fact that, try as they might through the years, Bertha and Marcus Goldman could never discover a way in which they were even remotely related.

Before Marcus married her, Bertha Goldman had had—and it was unusual for the 1840's—a career. She had supported herself quite nicely doing embroidery and fine needlework for Philadelphia society women. None other than Mrs. Wistar Morris wore a Bertha Goldman hat. Soon, with Bertha's help, Marcus Goldman was able to make the transition from dry-goods and notions peddler to respectable shopkeeper. He set up his own clothing store in Market Street, and rented a comfortable house in Green Street. But Bertha hated Philadelphia. She was urging her husband to take another step forward—to New York, where she had friends.

In 1849, if anyone had looked over the incoming steerage passengers with an eye to predicting which one seemed least likely to succeed, Solomon Loeb might easily have been selected. He was a thin, sallow, fidgety boy with intense, frightened-looking, blue eyes. His hair had receded prematurely from his forehead, leaving a fluffy mound of curly black hair on either side of his head, creating an effect of furry horns. He had been a sickly child of an even sicklier family—of fifteen Loeb children, only six had lived to maturity—and he had developed an obsession about his health and had a pathological fear of germs which conditions in steerage did little to soothe. He had been violently seasick the entire journey, during which, he later swore, not a mouthful of food had passed his lips. Halfway across the Atlantic—traveling with his only pair of shoes strapped to his back—he had decided that he was going to die, and begged a fellow

passenger to throw him overboard. The passenger demurred and wanted to know, “Why don’t you throw yourself over? Why make me do it?” Weeping, Solomon said that he was too weak to lift himself up to the rail. “Just put me up on the rail so I can roll over,” he said.

Loeb had come from the Rhineland city of Worms, where his father had been a poor wine merchant, as had several generations of Loebes before him. Still, Solomon’s mother, Rosina, laid claim to a certain social standing. She was a contemporary of Kaiser Wilhelm I and liked to talk of “*Ich und der Kaiser*,” suggesting that she and the Kaiser had actually been friends. She could recall Napoleon and the time when the Rhineland was freed and Jews were first permitted to have surnames of their own. Rosina often left the impression that she herself had had something to do with this. Like Joseph Seligman’s mother, Rosina Loeb had been accused of giving her son “grandiose ideas,” and she had picked Solomon as her first boy to emigrate. She had also selected Cincinnati as Solomon’s destination. The son of some cousins of hers named Kuhn had gone there a few years earlier and was reported to be prospering.

In the 1830’s and ’40’s, many Germans—Jews and non-Jews—had settled in and around Philadelphia. (Earlier migrations had been attracted by the liberal policies of William Penn. Later, Germans went to Pennsylvania to be with other Germans.) Now the German movement was farther westward, to the bustling Ohio River port which was then the third largest city in the United States. In 1849 boatbuilding, shipping, and meat-packing were Cincinnati’s main industries. As many as three hundred river boats steamed into the harbor a day, and over a quarter of the country’s pork was packed there. The city had such a large German-speaking population that it was virtually bilingual, and German was taught in all public and parochial schools. The section of town north of the canal, where most of the Germans lived, was known as “Over the Rhine.” Jews, of course, were not particularly attracted by the pork-packing industry and were drawn, instead, into the textile trade, which was also booming, and into cloak and suit manufacturing. Abraham Kuhn, who had started as a peddler, had opened a dry-goods shop and now operated a small factory where he made men’s and boys’ pants. He had made enough money to send home to Germany for his brothers and sisters. He was looking for another helper, and he took on Solomon.

Temperamentally, the two men balanced each other. Abe Kuhn was phlegmatic. Solomon was excitable. Abe had fallen in love with fabrics, their colors and textures. Solomon was color-blind and didn't know buckram from bombazine. But he understood money and knew how to sell. Abe Kuhn had been thinking of opening another outlet for his goods in New York, and Solomon's first job was to set this up. Soon he was back in New York and had opened a soft-goods shop at 31 Nassau Street, around the corner from the Seligmans. For several years, while Kuhn minded the shop and factory in Cincinnati, Loeb commuted back and forth between the two cities, carrying the pants from factory to store on the Erie Canal. Soon he was able to send back to Germany for his brothers and sisters, along with his mother and father, and settle them in Cincinnati. All the Kuhns and Loebes, plus some additional cousins named Netter and Wolff, worked in the Cincinnati business, and presently they began to marry one another. Solomon married Abe's sister Fanny, and Abe married Solomon's sister. The double brothers-in-law then changed the name of their operation to Kuhn, Loeb & Company, and they all, nine Loebes and four Kuhns, moved into one large house "Over the Rhine." Fanny bore Solomon his first child in this house, a daughter whom the couple named Therese. This large and happy and prosperous clan might never have left Cincinnati if Fanny had not become pregnant again and, along with her second baby, died in childbirth.

A family conference was called to decide what was to be done in this unhappy situation. Little Therese, the cousins said, needed a mother. There were no unmarried girls left in the family for Solomon. Obviously, seasick-prone or not, the thing for Solomon to do was to go back to Germany and find a new bride. In fact, the cousins had a candidate in mind—a Mannheim girl named Betty Gallenberg. That no young girl from the existing German Jewish stock in Cincinnati was considered may seem odd. The truth was that clans like the Loebes and Kuhns, to whom the family was the business and the business was the family, knew virtually no one in America outside the family group. A likely German Jewish girl might have lived right next door, but they would not have met her.

So, gritting his teeth, Solomon set off on his *Brautschau*. In Mannheim he called on Betty Gallenberg. She was plain as a pudding, plump, motherly, healthy, a good cook and housekeeper, and, since Solomon was

considering her qualifications as a child's nurse more than as a wife, he put his proposition to her. She accepted it, they were married without further ado, and he fetched her back to Cincinnati.

It now began to be apparent that neither Solomon Loeb nor Abe Kuhn possessed Seligman-sized ambitions. Both had prospered and both were satisfied with the tidy little fortunes they had amassed. Kuhn had always been homesick for Germany and planned to take his wife and family home. Loeb agreed that he was ready to retire also, but he was fond of Cincinnati and would stay there. He explained this to his young wife, who, at that point, took the future of Kuhn, Loeb & Company into her own hands.

A few years earlier, Charles Dickens had visited Cincinnati; it was one of the few American cities he liked. Not so Betty Gallenberg Loeb. She hated "Porkopolis," as it had been nicknamed, from the moment she saw it. She considered it a crude, boring, uncivilized outpost. She was also apparently unprepared for the plethora of Loeb in-laws she found waiting to welcome her, and was irked by their tendency to patronize her and treat her like a housemaid. "They treat me as if they had bought me," she wrote angrily home to Germany. She referred to Cincinnati as "a city of pigs, a monster piggery," and it is likely that she included some of her husband's relatives in this category. She found her brothers- and sisters-in-law noisy and boorish, and, though her own background was no more genteel than theirs, she considered them common. One sister-in-law, she pointed out with disgust, had given her a dozen jars of homemade preserves as a wedding present. As for the men, she found "everyone talking about nothing but business, and how to get rich quickly." That being the case, she decided to find out just how rich her new husband was. She looked over his accounts and discovered that he was worth nearly half a million dollars. That was sufficient, she told him, to move her "out of the pigs" and into New York.

MATTERS OF STYLE

New York in the 1840's was changing—more rapidly, perhaps, than any city in the world has ever changed—from a picturesque seaport “city of masts and spires” into a noisy and competitive commercial capital. Society, too, was becoming more competitive as more rich newcomers strove to get in, and suddenly bookshops and news kiosks bristled with books and articles on how to be accepted, and what was “good form” and what was not. Still, though everyone both in society and out of it talked incessantly about what was “proper social usage” and about “etiquette” and “*comme il faut*,” things seem to have remained in a somewhat primitive state, to judge by some of the social “dos” and “don'ts” published in the period.

One etiquette writer, for instance, says reproachfully, “What an article is a spittoon as an appendage to a handsomely furnished drawing room!” and another advises guests at a dinner party against “shaking with your feet the chair of a neighbor,” and suggests that “ladies should never dine with their gloves on unless their hands are not fit to be seen.” If a lady should make “an unseemly digestive sound” at dinner or “raise an unmanageable portion to her mouth,” one should “cease all conversation with her and look steadfastly into the opposite part of the room.” While at table, says one writer, “all allusions to dyspepsia, indigestion, or any other disorders of the stomach, are vulgar and disgusting. The word ‘stomach’ should never be uttered at table,” and the same writer cautions that “the fashion of wearing black silk mittens at breakfast is now obsolete.” When traveling alone, ladies should “avoid saying anything to women in showy attire, with painted faces, and white kid gloves ... you will derive no pleasure from making acquaintance with females who are evidently coarse and vulgar, even if you know that they are rich.”

Men of the era seem to have been even slower to learn the rules of delicacy. One manual of the 1840's says: "The rising generation of young elegants in America are particularly requested to observe that, in polished society, it is not quite *comme il faut* for gentlemen to blow their noses with their fingers, especially when in the street." The gentlemen's habit of chewing tobacco created no end of special problems. "A lady on the second seat of a box at the theatre," writes a social critic of the day, "found, when she went home, the back of her pelisse entirely spoilt, by some man behind not having succeeded in trying to spit past her." And an English visitor was surprised to see John Jacob Astor remove his chewing tobacco from his mouth and absently begin tracing a watery design with it on a windowpane. Other European visitors were startled by what appears to have been a social custom exclusively New York's. On the horse-drawn Fifth Avenue omnibuses it was considered *de rigueur*, when these vehicles became crowded, for seated gentlemen to let ladies perch on their knees.

Though much of the criticism of New York's bad manners came from Europeans, it does appear to have been largely justified. In 1848 the New York *Herald* took New York society to task for "loud talking at table, impertinent staring at strangers, brusqueness of manners among the ladies, laughable attempts at courtly ease and self-possession among the men—the secret of all this vulgarity in Society is that wealth, or the reputation of wealth, constitutes the open sesame to its delectable precincts."

Very much a precinct leader was August Belmont. His passionate interest in high society was perhaps peculiar for men of his day (editors and cartoonists of the nineteenth century usually depicted social climbing as a woman's occupation), but at least it was consistent. Perhaps his glimpse of Rothschild grandeur had given him his abiding urge to be a social potentate. In any case, three years after his arrival in America, we find him dashing in Elkton, Maryland, and, "over a subject too trite to be mentioned," fighting a duel.

Dueling was an established social-climbing technique, and August Belmont seems to have chosen his opponent more for his publicity value than anything else. It was Edward Heyward, "one of the exquisite sons of Mr. Wm. Heyward," a member of the ancient and noted Heyward family of Charleston. No one was killed in the duel, but both men were injured, and Belmont, who was shot in the thigh, declared his honor satisfied. And, by

having chosen a Heyward as a dueling partner, he established himself with the press and the public as a gentleman of Heyward quality. The duel, in fact, did more than anything else to register the Belmont name in the annals of American society.

What the quarrel, which took place at Niblo's restaurant in New York, was really about is now uncertain. Belmont, naturally, always liked to leave the impression that Heyward had made some ungallant allusion to a lady in Belmont's party. But there is also a story that Heyward had made a veiled reference to Belmont's Jewishness—a particularly touchy subject.

Belmont was always sorry that his dueling scar appeared in such an ignominious spot, and the wound gave him a pronounced limp which would be a permanent affliction. The wound and the limp seemed to increase his bitterness. His rolling gait heightened his threatening appearance as he entered doorways of salons. The duel and the scar seemed to add to his sinister allure, and through New York drawing rooms rumors began to circulate of certain society ladies who, for one reason or another, had been permitted to see that scar.

In the years since his arrival Belmont had been so successful at channeling Rothschild funds into the United States Treasury in return for government securities that he was rewarded, in 1844, by being appointed United States Consul General to Austria—a move designed not only to provide Mr. Belmont with prestige but also to place him close to the Vienna House of Rothschild where he could be of further usefulness. Things, of course, did not always go smoothly. When the state of Pennsylvania defaulted on \$35 million worth of state bonds held by British investors, including the Rothschilds, Belmont, in Paris trying to place another U.S. Federal Government loan, was icily told by Baron de Rothschild, "Tell them you have seen the man who is at the head of the finances of Europe, and that he has told you that they cannot borrow a dollar. Not a dollar." Still, the United States was too good a customer of Europe's—buying such items as railroad ties, which lack of American know-how still made difficult to produce here, in return for American cotton and wheat—for the Rothschilds to remain angry for long. Also, Belmont was too canny a trader to let such upsets damage his friendships on both sides of the Atlantic.

In New York he was very much a man about town. He had made himself, à la the Rothschilds, a connoisseur of horseflesh and had, with his friend

Leonard Jerome, founded Jerome Park Racetrack. But he had never been invited to join the Union Club, considered the best men's club in town. He also seems to have invented a social attitude which was soon being widely copied—the attitude of indifference. When invited for dinner at eight, August Belmont rarely appeared before ten or eleven. Punctuality, he seemed to be saying, was the courtesy of peasants. It seemed very chic and “very European” to arrive at dinner with the finger bowls, and this affectation—which is still to be encountered in New York, to the bafflement of Europeans—may be blamed on August Belmont.

Belmont did not do particularly well when it came to cultivating such old patron families as the Van Rensselaers, nor was he admired by the Astors, the fur-trading family which, in the 1840's, was probably the richest family in New York. He did, on the other hand, get along nicely with such Old Guard families as the Costers and the Morrises, and he was also a friend of an ex-ferryboat captain, now a millionaire, named “Commodore” Cornelius Vanderbilt. New York society was giving up picnics and skating parties and turning to large formal subscription balls—always given in hotels or restaurants since there were still no private homes big enough to contain them—and it irked August Belmont that he was not invited to every one. There was, for instance, the great City Ball of January, 1841, so called because it was held at the old City Hotel. Eight hundred guests danced in a ballroom lighted with two thousand tapers, but August Belmont was not among them. Soon a series of Assembly balls was organized to be held at Delmonico's, and, to make certain that he was asked, Belmont took decisive action.

In a story told by the Van Rensselaers, Belmont went to the invitation committee and said, “I have been investigating the accounts of you gentlemen on the Street. I can assure you that either I get an invitation to the Assembly this year or else the day after the Assembly each of you will be a ruined man.” It was one of the most telling examples of the kind of power that could be wielded by one man (“a Wall Street banker, not even a native American”) in nineteenth-century New York. Belmont got his invitation, but—according to a story that sounds much more like wishful thinking than the truth—arrived at the Assembly to find himself the only person there.

Belmont, on the other hand, though there was still some uncertainty about where he actually *lived* (he seemed to inhabit a series of hotels) could and did give balls of his own. Fancy-dress balls were his favorites, and he loved to put on a powdered wig and ruffled collar and appear as Louis XV or, with a tricorn hat and sword, as Napoleon. (Once, when he learned that another guest was planning to come as Louis XV, Belmont appeared in a full suit of steel armor inlaid with gold which had cost him \$10,000, causing a bemused reporter from the London *Chronicle* to ask, “Were all the costumes ticketed with the price?”) In some ways Belmont seemed consciously trying to outdo the Astors. In 1846 John Jacob Astor, Jr., married the daughter of Thomas L. Gibbes, a South Carolina aristocrat, and the marriage was the occasion of a great reception. The Astors’ “spacious mansion in Lafayette Place was open from cellar to garret, blazing with a thousand lights,” but August Belmont once more was not invited. Then, in 1847, he made a move that forever removed doubts about his social position. He proposed to, and was accepted by, Caroline Slidell Perry.

He had chosen her as carefully and cynically as he chose his wines, his dueling opponents, the stocks for his portfolio, his name, and his religion. The Perrys were not imposingly rich, but they had all the social cachet that Belmont wanted and needed, more than he needed money. Caroline was the daughter of Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry, hero of the Mexican War and the officer later credited with having “opened Japan to the West,” and her uncle was another naval commander, Oliver Hazard Perry, hero of the War of 1812 and the Battle of Lake Erie. Caroline, furthermore, was wan, pale, and dreamily beautiful, an exquisite creature who wept bitterly when she was told that families “of wretched poor” lived south of Canal Street, which was why her coachman would not drive her there. In 1848 the elder John Jacob Astor died leaving a fortune of twenty million dollars, and was accorded a great funeral conducted by “six Episcopal clergymen.” The Belmont-Perry nuptials of that same year had only one clergyman officiating, but they were of course Episcopal. The wedding was at Grace Church, and it was an even more glittering social event than the Astor funeral. There were at the reception—in addition to a complement of Morrisises, Vanderbilts, Costers, Goelets. (no Van Rensselaers), Webbs, and Winthrops—even a few Astors, come out of mourning. Even more

important, as far as August Belmont was concerned, was the fact that a few weeks before his wedding he was invited to join the Union Club.

Lower Fifth Avenue and Washington Square were already sprouting palaces of brownstone and marble. Though there was still no Central Park to give Fifth Avenue a garden view for much of its length, that wide thoroughfare running up the spine of Manhattan was already becoming the city's best residential address. Soon after their marriage, the young Belmonts established themselves in a lower Fifth Avenue house that was grander than anything that existed in New York. It was, among other things, the first private house in the city to have its own ballroom—a room designed for nothing but the annual Belmont ball and which, as Edith Wharton commented later, “was left for three hundred and sixty-four days of the year to shuttered darkness, with its gilt chairs stacked in a corner and its chandelier in a bag.” The Belmonts were also the first to own their own red carpet, to be rolled down the marble front steps and across the sidewalk for parties, instead of renting one, along with the chairs, from a caterer.

The Belmont house awed New York society. It was much more magnificent than the Astors' old house in Lafayette Place, and it made everybody feel that they had been doing everything very provincially until August Belmont came along from—well, where *was* he from actually? people asked. The Belmont mansion was one that New Yorkers pointed out to visiting friends from other cities. When the visitors expressed curiosity about what lay within it, New Yorkers said, “We shall see whether we can get you an invitation.” And so August Belmont, the archetype social climber, had made his house the goal of every climber's dreams. Belmont's relationship to New York society became, according to one observer, “like a man on the back of a donkey holding out, to make the donkey move, a carrot on a stick. He manages to lead the donkey forward and yet, at the same time, the beast is obliged to bear his weight.”

To be sure, he was guilty of some rather odd gaffes, such as having his portrait painted with his hat on. And there was no uncertainty about his father-in-law's position in the Belmont household. Belmont used the Commodore as his butler. “There's a good fellow,” he would say to the old gentleman, “run down to the cellar and see if there are six more bottles of the *Rapid* Madeira.” And, as the Commodore scurried off, Belmont would call after him, “And try not to shake them on the stairs!” But the Belmonts'

was the first house in New York to have its art gallery lighted from a skylight in the roof, and the collection of art itself was remarkable—including Madrazo, Meyer, Rosa Bonheur, Meissonier, Munkácsy, Vibert, and, to scandalize New York society, a number of the voluptuous nudes of William Bouguereau. One of the most scandalized was Belmont's neighbor, James Lenox, who lived directly opposite him on Fifth Avenue. Lenox disapproved of nearly everything about Belmont, but the Bouguereau nudes he considered downright immoral. Belmont, learning this, hung the largest and the nudest Bouguereau in his front foyer, where it confronted the Lenox house every time the Belmont door was opened—which, with the Belmont entertaining schedule, was often. Lenox, a miserly sort, became obsessive on the subject of Belmont's extravagance, and, according to Lucius Beebe, when Lenox was told that August Belmont spent \$20,000 a month on wine alone, he collapsed of a heart attack and died.

It was August Belmont's reputation as a host that gave his parties priority over almost anyone's in New York. His chef had been trained by the legendary Carême, and was given regular refresher lessons by such restaurateurs as Lorenzo Delmonico. Singlehanded, Belmont introduced gourmet food to the New York private home, which up to then had been very much on a corned-beef-and-potatoes diet. Two hundred guests could sit down at a table set with the Belmont gold service. They were waited on by an equal number of footmen, who presented them with such delicacies as *aspic de canvasback* and truffled ice cream. Of course it was rumored that he had not only supervised the design and interior decoration of his brownstone palace, selected all the paintings, porcelains, statuary, and *objets d'art*, but also interviewed and trained all the servants, did the ordering, told his gardeners what hothouse flowers to grow for the dinner table, oversaw the flower arrangements, selected the guests, planned the menus, checked the place cards, and taught his chef new dishes. He was once overheard saying that the secret of *pâté de foie gras de canard de Toulouse* was: "Never lift the lid of the casserole while it's simmering."

It was also said that he dictated the notes his wife wrote, personally picked out all her gowns and jewelry, and could sometimes be found going over the marble table tops with a dustcloth. These details seemed odd, a little out of keeping, and not quite *comme il faut*. But then everyone had to admit that Caroline Perry Belmont wasn't exactly clever. And at least he

was gallant. He always gave her credit. As his guests entered his drawing room to be received by his slim, pale confection of a wife, he would murmur, "Isn't my wife a marvel? Who but she would have the courage to wear pink this season?"

To immigrants who were his contemporaries, such as the Seligman brothers, August Belmont became a kind of symbol of what a poor German Jew could do, with any luck at all, in the New World.

TO THE GOLD FIELDS

In 1850 the Seligman enterprises were scattered across the East, and the brothers themselves were still, to a certain extent, nomadic. Though the boys were prospering, living was sparse and frugal. Joseph insisted on this. Joseph wanted his brothers to be able to pack up and move on a moment's notice, whenever a new business opportunity presented itself. The boys lived in rooming houses in their respective cities, and Joseph—still the only married brother—occupied quarters that were equally unprepossessing, a two-room flat in downtown Manhattan, off Broadway. He was very much in charge of the family's farflung operations, and made frequent trips to Watertown and St. Louis to check on things. William, the brother Joseph trusted the least, required the greatest attention, and there is evidence that the entrance of all the Stettheimers into the family—Max not only had a father but several brothers who needed jobs—was becoming a problem.

At the same time, the general disorder affecting America had been correctly diagnosed as “gold fever,” and the first Seligman to succumb to the new disease was twenty-three-year-old Jesse in Watertown. At first, Jesse toyed with the idea of buying his own pick and shovel and going directly to the California hills to dig. Joseph, however, opposed this. Seligmans, he pointed out, knew nothing about digging. What they did know about was stores. He suggested that Jesse consider opening a Seligman store somewhere in the vicinity of where gold was being spent. Jesse agreed, and asked permission to go.

Joseph was reluctant to have Jesse leave the profitable business in Watertown, but he had also been worried about “artistic” Leopold, the dreamy-eyed brother who had reached the advanced age of nineteen without contributing anything to the Seligman fortunes beyond pencil

sketches. Joseph decided that Jesse should take Leopold with him to San Francisco and teach him storekeeping. Henry would be left in charge of Watertown, and could, in addition, take over Jesse's old duties of playing cards and checkers with a teetotaling Lieutenant Grant.

Jesse and Leopold had originally planned to travel overland to San Francisco, but Joseph's wife, Babet, made such a fuss—wailing, “But the Indians! The terrible Indians!”—that plans were changed and the boys booked steamer passage. It was a route that would take them through the Caribbean to Colon, Panama, over the Isthmus on mule-back, and then upward along the Mexican and California coast. Onto the ship with them went a staggering amount of small merchandise—\$20,000 worth—which took nearly all the capital the Seligman brothers had on hand at the time. But, the boys figured, California prices, spurred by the gold rush, were bound to be inflated.

Debarking at Colón, the two loaded their stock of goods on mules and started across the Isthmus. Soon others from the boat were ill and dying from Panama fever, but the two boys with their important cargo pushed on through the jungle. Midway across, at Gorgona, the supply of mules ran short; there were not enough to carry the Seligmans' goods, and the boys were forced to stop. Here, young Leopold came down with fever. Two weeks later mules arrived, and Leopold had to be lashed to the back of Jesse's mule. When they reached Panama City and the Pacific, they had missed the steamer to San Francisco. Leopold, delirious, was carried aboard the wooden side-wheeler *Northerner* on a stretcher. It was not until the boat reached Acapulco that he was out of danger.

Looking over San Francisco in 1850, Jesse wrote in his ledger: “Very high winds prevail at times—there is a scarcity of water ... the houses are frame structures, a few of iron.” And he saw “Great danger of a conflagration.” Fire was a major threat to a dry-goods merchant, and Jesse knew this from sorry experience. A year before, a fire in his Watertown building had destroyed \$6,500 worth of merchandise, of which only \$4,500 was insured. Prudently turning down several “frame structures,” Jesse managed to rent one of the few brick buildings in San Francisco, which stood next to “the gay and fashionable Tehama House, kept by a Captain Jones” at the corner of California and Sansome streets.

Jesse was right about gold-crazy prices. San Francisco bootblacks were earning twenty dollars a day. To launder a dozen shirts cost ten dollars. Coins smaller than half-dollars were considered worthless and were not accepted by tradesmen. In his new store Jesse's markup was what the market would bear, and it was soon apparent that it would bear quite a bit. Tin cups and pans for which he had paid pennies in the East were sold for five and ten dollars apiece. He sold five-dollar blankets for forty dollars, and wine and whiskey for twenty to thirty dollars a quart (though Seligman today don't like to remember that they were once in the liquor business). Through it all he tried to teach Leopold the rudiments of storekeeping. But Leopold, having recovered from Panama fever, now succumbed to agonies of homesickness, and was a slow learner.

San Francisco was a wide-open, rip-roaring gambling town. Men were shot down in the streets at the slightest provocation—one day a stray bullet out of nowhere tore through Jesse's hat—and law enforcement was a casual affair at best. Jesse was careful to avoid the temptations of San Francisco, and was even more careful to see that Leopold avoided them. This wasn't always easy, since some of the most tempting goings on were next door in Captain Jones's Tehama House Hotel. In a letter home, Jesse observed that one of the best-paid professions in San Francisco was "probably the world's oldest," and ladies of Tehama House quality charged three or four hundred dollars for an evening's entertainment. In less fashionable parts of town the streets teemed with American, German, Mexican, Chinese, and Kanaka women from the Sandwich Islands who were willing to oblige for less pay. "We are," Jesse assured a worrying Joseph, "careful to eschew such pleasures, you may be sure." (But once young Leopold wistfully made a little list of some of the most popular ladies' names: "Madame St. Armand, Helene, Angele, Emilie...") To while away their San Francisco evenings, Jesse played his flute and Leopold worked at his sketch pad, trying to ignore the squeals and giggles and occasional bursts of gunfire from the Tehama House. In view of the prices charged by laundries and bootblacks, the boys also washed and ironed their own shirts and shined their shoes. In another prudent move, Jesse joined Howard Engine Company No. 3 of the San Francisco Fire Department.

On the morning of May 3, 1851, fire broke out. Within hours the business section of the city was in flames. Empty air spaces under the planked streets

became great blowpipes to spread the fire from block to block. Jesse helped fight the fire in the center of the city until it was declared out of control, then hurried back to his store. Next door, he found Captain Jones and his staff of waiters, bellboys, croupiers, and “actresses” on the roof of the Tehama House stretching water-soaked blankets across the gables and standing by with buckets and brooms.

“You’ve got a frame building!” Jesse called up to the Captain. “What good do you think those wet blankets are going to do?”

“I’ll take care of my building and you take care of yours,” said the Captain.

“But don’t you see?” said Jesse. “The fire will reach my building first. If we can save my brick building, we can save yours as well.”

The Captain shouted, “By God, Seligman, I think you’re right!” Immediately he dispatched all the bellboys, waiters, croupiers, and actresses, with their blankets and their buckets, to the roof of Jesse’s store. Then Jesse diverted Howard Engine Company No. 3 to service in his block. Seldom was a job of Seligman salesmanship to prove so profitable. Of all the buildings in the area, only two were completely spared—Jesse’s store and the Tehama House. After the fire Jesse found himself the proprietor of the only general store left standing in San Francisco. Frantically, he wrote home to Joseph for more merchandise.

In later years Jesse used to say proudly that, though he was certainly in a position to, he never took advantage of the disaster by raising any of his prices by so much as a penny in the months after the fire. But he didn’t lower them, either. After all, Jesse’s prices, by standards elsewhere in the country, were already outrageous. As San Francisco’s only postfire merchant, he made what can only be described as a bundle. Soon profits from San Francisco were accounting for such a large share of the Seligmans’ income that the Watertown store was closed and Henry hurried to San Francisco to help Jesse, who had been getting precious little help from Leopold. (Coincidentally, Grant’s 4th Infantry was ordered out of Madison Barracks that same year and was dispatched to the Pacific Coast.)

The Seligmans’ importing-retailing days were almost over. In New York their most profitable import had become gold from California. From New York, gold that was not traded on the market traveled on to Europe to purchase new supplies for the Seligman stores. The Seligmans still dealt in

dry goods, cotton, hides, boots, shoes, pots, pans, cigars, undershirts, and whiskey, but as buyers and sellers of bullion they found themselves, almost before they knew what had happened to them, in the banking business. By 1857 over \$500 million worth of gold had made its way eastward from the California hills, a good deal of it passing through the hands of the Seligmans.

To become a banker in those naïve days was almost as simple a matter as saying, “I am a banker.” A National Banking Act did not exist until after the Civil War, and banks—particularly private banks—were organized with startling informality. Everybody in New York, it seemed, was involved in one way or another with the money trade, and it was said, in fact, that to be a banker all one needed was to dress like one. Joseph Seligman and his brothers had already learned many banking fundamentals. The Seligman stores had sold goods on credit, loaned money, bought and sold IOU’s, and even carried deposit accounts. “Stay liquid,” Joseph was writing his brothers. “Never invest in property, or give a mortgage loan.” Joseph had made an important discovery. There was a considerable difference between buying and selling undershirts and buying and selling funds and credit. Undershirts could earn profits for the merchant only during the hours his store was open; otherwise it stood idle, a liability. But money stayed active around the clock. Credits were not subject to opening hours. When money was put to work, it worked twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred and sixty-five days a year, and stopped for no holidays, Jewish or gentile. “Money,” said Joseph solemnly to his brothers, “earns money even while you sleep.”

By 1852 Joseph Seligman, trading his bullion from California on the gold market, was a familiar figure in the New York financial community. His name and his credit were known by the big commercial banks. He was making the logical, almost inevitable transition from merchant to banker. It was a progression that other immigrant merchants would soon make, but the Seligmans, of the German Jewish group, were making it first. (Later on, in Jewish society, there would be a point of social distinction between families such as the Seligmans who evolved from storekeeping into banking and such families as the Strauses of Macy’s who had “stayed behind” in retailing.)

Through the early 1850's the American economy spun upward in a giddy spiral. Led by the flood of gold from California, stocks on the New York Stock Exchange climbed higher and higher. The boom was on in Western lands and railroads, and shares in these companies were used as collateral for loans, which were used to buy more shares, which were used as collateral for loans—and on and on. The Bank of England was expanding, tariffs were rising, and New York's commercial banks kept easing credit and then easing it some more. The stock market seemed to know no top. Never before had New York women been so extravagantly dressed. Gambling at large private parties suddenly became a factor in New York social life, and everyone gossiped about this or that great fortune that had been lost, or won, at whist, poker, or roulette. Mansions marched up the side of Murray Hill, and newspapers fretted about parties of the newly rich which turned into "orgies of Pompeian license." The stock of a railroad company, meanwhile, that existed nowhere but in a promoter's mind climbed from twenty-five cents a share on Monday to \$4,000 a share on Friday. These were busy days for the Seligmans.

One bright morning in 1857, however, Joseph, on his trading rounds, overheard the cashier of one of New York's commercial banks speak of a distressing shortage of cash. The bank was going to begin to call in loans. Joseph moved quickly. He ordered his brothers to "liquidate all but prime securities." When the bubble burst, the Seligman silver and gold were packed in strongboxes and stuffed for safekeeping under Joseph's and Babet's bed. In the course of the Panic of 1857 every commercial bank in New York closed its doors but one. The Seligman brothers went through it unscathed, and that venerable Wall Street epithet, "the Midas touch," which would be applied, rightly or wrongly, to so many financial figures in years to come, was now applied to them. The recovery from the Panic of 1857 was as spectacular as the panic itself. The bubble had no sooner burst than it began to reinflate. So much gold was pouring into New York from California that gold held in New York banks climbed from eight million dollars' worth in October to twenty-eight million two months later, and a ten-million-dollar loan from the Rothschilds made, via August Belmont, to bolster the credit of U.S. banks was repaid the same day. But in this new upsurge the Seligmans again had the advantage of a head start.

In 1857 Joseph established himself in his first Manhattan brown-stone—rented, of course, for he would not be tied down with real estate—on Murray Hill, the city’s best address, and a year later he rented himself a summer place from A. A. Low, a wealthy merchant, on then fashionable Staten Island. A multiple-residence pattern for German Jewish society was thus indelibly established. Each year since their marriage Babet had borne him a child—already there were five—and the multiple-baby pattern for Seligmans was thus preserved. Joseph, a success as a provider, husband, and father, was beginning to believe his own myth. He had begun to think it was time he had his portrait painted. (Two years later he did; in it he looks most dignified.) From a peddler Joseph Seligman was turning into a Personage.

He had begun to take careful notice of the behavior of August Belmont. “He is a Jew,” Joseph commented, “yet he goes everywhere, meets everyone, and ‘Society’ swirls about him.” Joseph was a little uneasy about “swirling” with society, but he would not have minded doing business with same. He was not a toady, though, and would not fawn or flatter his way into gentile drawing rooms. If those in society wanted him, they would have to come to him.

Meanwhile, he had the satisfaction of suspecting that only August Belmont stood in the path of his ambition to become the most important Jewish banker in New York.

And as for social life he had his brothers and his sisters, who were becoming quite a crowd in themselves. By now, four more of Joseph’s brothers were solidly married to solidly Jewish girls—party-loving William to Regine Wedeles, handsome James (his was considered the most auspicious marriage of all) to Rosa Content of the pre-Revolutionary family, Jesse to a girl from Germany named Henriette Hellman (Henriette claimed she could trace her ancestry back to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba), and Henry to Regine Levi, who had two younger sisters whom two more Seligman boys, Leopold and Abraham, would soon marry, drawing the complex of family and money still tighter together. Family Sunday dinners at Joseph’s house were now introduced. “Sunday evenings at the Seligmans,” in fact, would continue as an institution, as an almost classic fixture of German Jewish social life in New York, for nearly eighty years.

During this period, the Lehmans of Montgomery, Alabama, had become very Southern—slaveowning, Southern-accented, and devotees of Southern cooking, even of the pork. Cotton, still king, was doing for the Lehmans approximately what gold was doing for the Seligmans, and the living was easy. The three brothers were still cotton brokers, and their customers were buyers and manufacturers in the American North and in England. Payments for cotton took the form of four-month drafts on New York banks and sixty-day sterling bills on London banks, and these bills of exchange—promissory notes representing goods in transit—were negotiable. In the South they were one of the most popular forms of currency, and in New York these cotton bills could be sold for cash, at a discount. New York, then, was the true center of the South's cotton economy, and frequent trips to New York were necessary. Emanuel Lehman was usually assigned to the New York money run, while Henry and Mayer carried on in Montgomery.

In the fall of 1855 Montgomery had another of its periodic yellow fever epidemics. Henry Lehman had always feared the disease, and the new epidemic was savage. At his brothers' urging, Henry traveled to New Orleans, which was considered safer. There, the founder of Lehman Brothers came down with yellow fever, and died at the age of thirty-three. The surviving brothers, twenty-nine and twenty-six respectively, were left to carry on.

By 1858 it had become mandatory that the Lehmans have a permanent New York office, and so Emanuel, who had had the money-market experience, headed North to establish himself at 119 Liberty Street, hard by the Seligmans. While Joseph Seligman was observing the habits of August Belmont, Emanuel Lehman began observing the habits of Joseph Seligman. That same year Emanuel married a New York girl named Pauline Sondheim, and the Lehmans rented a Murray Hill brownstone—also hard by the Seligmans. Mayer, who got along well with the planters and farmers, remained in Montgomery and married a New Orleans girl, herself an immigrant from Würzburg, named Babette Newgass.*

From a tactical standpoint, this deployment of cotton-trading Lehmans was brilliant. But thus deployed on opposite sides of the Mason-Dixon Line, the Civil War—the war the whole South had been talking about but that the Lehmans had never believed could actually happen—found them and disunited them. In April, 1861, President Lincoln imposed the

blockade. Mayer, in Montgomery, was cut off from his Northern manufacturers and his Northern money. Emanuel, in the North, was cut off from his Southern supply of cotton. It was a staggering blow. “*Alles is beendet!*” Emanuel scrawled despairingly on a pad in his New York office.

If buildings in the financial district had been tall enough to make a suicidal leap productive, Emanuel might have leaped—thereby depriving New York of what is now the largest investment banking house in Wall Street.

* There are very nearly as many Babettes and Babets in the trees of German Jewish families as there are Mayers and Meyers. From a business standpoint Mayer Lehman’s marriage to Miss Newgass seemed particularly prudent. Her sister was married to Isaias Hellman, one of the San Francisco Hellmans, and founder of the first bank in Los Angeles; he later became president of the Wells Fargo—Nevada Bank in San Francisco. Babette also had a brother, Benjamin Newgass, who lived in England and served as the Lehmans’ representative in the manufacturing British Midlands.

“THIS UNHOLY REBELLION”

William Seligman liked to say that he had predicted the Civil War, and implied that the nice position the Seligmans found themselves in as a result of the war was largely his doing. William exaggerated. On the other hand, William, already expanding in girth from seven-course dinners with nine wines (*two* sherries with the soup, no less!), did make a business move just before the war's outbreak. It turned out to be such a lucky one that Joseph rewarded William with his very own initial—next to Joseph's—in the ultimate firm name, J. & W. Seligman & Company. William had parted company with his brother-in-law, Max Stettheimer, in St. Louis (the Stettheimer-Seligman alliance was increasingly uneasy) and had come to New York to join Joseph. There, in 1860, William decided, since the Seligmans stores sold such items as undershirts and pants, to buy a factory that made undershirts and pants. It was not so imaginative a move as Guggenheim's stove polish, but it was most fortuitous.

The cannon that exploded over Fort Sumter had barely ceased to echo when William and Joseph had devised a strategy by which to woo government uniform contracts out of Washington for the new factory—which, it turned out, was the fourteenth-largest clothing house in those of the United States which had not seceded.

The Seligman strategy was this. First, the brothers made several generous personal “contributions” to the Union cause. These money gifts were gratefully accepted. Next, they contacted one of the few friends they had in the capital, a fellow German immigrant named Henry Gitterman. Gitterman's position in Washington was not lofty, but, for the Seligmans' purposes, it was crucial. He was an army sutler, or provisions agent. In a beautifully worded, apple-polishing letter to Mr. Gitterman, full of patriotic

zeal and suggestions of shared calamity, Joseph offered to join hands with Gitterman and help him “in any way possible during the great crisis facing our Nation.” Joseph further volunteered to send an able-bodied Seligman to Washington—young Isaac—to help Gitterman with his “multitudinous, onerous, and vitally important” chores (i.e., to help Gitterman buy uniforms). Gitterman, in an equally flowery reply, was overwhelmed at Joseph’s selflessness, loyalty, and high sense of duty—and accepted Isaac.

Isaac was a crotchety Seligman, with an individualistic approach to business. He had not joined his brothers in their New York and San Francisco operations. He had preferred to run his own lace and embroidery shop, removed from the others, in Cedar Street. His brothers had invited him to come in with them several times, but Isaac had declined. Isaac was a temperamental Seligman, with a sharp tongue and a quick temper, and had a reputation for barbed invective whenever business did not go exactly as he wished. But he was spunky, with great temerity and gall. The Washington assignment appealed to him. After all, he did not expect the embroidery and trimmings business to be particularly profitable in wartime. And so Isaac became what Joseph, during the early days of the war, referred to meaningfully as “our man in Washington.”

Isaac’s first discovery was that, strategy or no strategy, the Seligmans would have no trouble at all getting government contracts for army uniforms. The reason was dismal and simple. Larger, older-established Northern clothing manufacturers wanted nothing to do with government contracts. At the outbreak of the war the United States Treasury was in greater shambles than Fort Sumter. Southern banks had been quietly withdrawing large amounts of funds on deposit in the North. When Lincoln took office, he found his Treasury almost empty. The Federal debt was increasing, and American credit abroad was disappearing. Conservative businessmen wanted no deals whatever with the government. They considered it far too risky.

But risk was a stimulant to Isaac. As Gitterman’s assistant, he was soon assisting Gitterman to assist the Seligmans. Their first army order came through—for 200 sergeant majors’ chevrons and 200 quartermaster sergeants’ chevrons, at thirty cents apiece, a total order of \$120. It wasn’t much, but it was a toe in the door, and presently the Seligmans were asked

to outfit New York's 7th Regiment for active service—for a considerably larger figure.

Isaac busily got to know as many influential people in Washington as possible. Mr. Gitterman brought Isaac along to a large reception at the White House, where Isaac was introduced to a particularly important contact—President Lincoln. Isaac was surprised at the informality of White House receptions and was shocked to see “men appearing in their shirt sleeves! What would be thought of such an occurrence at a Court reception in London?” Gitterman was equally startled to hear young Isaac make this sartorial point to the President. The Seligmans, Isaac explained to Lincoln, were in the clothing business and could certainly outfit these improperly dressed gentlemen in nice-fitting suits and jackets. “We also make very nice uniforms, sir,” said Isaac. “The pride of any army!” Lincoln looked briefly confused, then smiled, and promised to make a note of this.

Sure enough, the size and number of the Seligmans' uniform contracts speedily mounted. Their clothing mills were put on a seven-day-week basis. But soon the hazards that went with accepting these orders became painfully apparent. In a letter to Gitterman in Washington, eight months after the Seligmans' first contract, Joseph wrote:

Your note just received, informing me that the appropriation for the clothing of the Army is exhausted, is startling and an alarming announcement to me, for the United States are indebted to my firm a million of dollars! Under the severe pressure of this burden we authorized you to make an arrangement for the payment of 400,000 of this sum in 3 year Treasury 7.30 Bonds.... I brought to Washington vouchers for this amount.... I had pledged to Banks in New York for 150,000 for which sum we gave our checks payable next week. If I am unable to realize this sum very promptly I see no alternative but the suspension of our house, which will drag down 20 other houses, and throw 400 operatives out of employ.

Do my dear sir, for God's sake see if you cannot make some arrangement with the Secretary, by which this dreadful catastrophe may be avoided.

This is really a question of life and death with me and I beg your earnest and prompt attention to it.

Apparently, Joseph got his money, for the records show \$1,437,483.61 paid to the Seligmans by the government in the twelve-month period following August 1, 1861. It is also clear that Joseph had to work for every penny of it. As part of his payment, he had been forced to accept, quite against his better judgment, hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of the "3 year Treasury 7.30 Bonds." Joseph, in his passionate belief in—and, at that point, need for—liquidity, was then obliged to try to sell these bonds. But the Union armies had suffered serious losses, and public faith in the North's ability to win the war was slipping. Pro-South and antidraft demonstrations were taking place in New York, and there were reports of "wealthy ladies in the North wearing Rebel cockades." Union bonds were unsalable. In desperation, Joseph boarded a ship for Europe.

There he found that news of the Union's finances had preceded him. The "7.30" bonds were designed to yield 7.3 percent interest, payable semiannually. In Europe such a high rate of interest was taken as a sign of panic in Washington—as indeed it was. Joseph was able to dispose of some of his bonds, but it was a slow and uphill process. Meanwhile, to pay for its uniforms, the Treasury was dumping more and more of its bonds into Joseph's unwilling hands. Joseph found himself in the agonizing position of having to sell Union shares, so that the Union could be supplied with money, so that the Union could pay his own bills with more shares, etc., etc., into what must have seemed a whirlpool of unsupported credit.

In later years, Joseph Seligman's bond-selling efforts in Europe during this period became one of the most highly debated points in the Seligmans' career. According to Linton Wells, "In March, 1862, Joseph went to Washington and consulted President Lincoln and Secretary of the Treasury Chase regarding the placing of [Union] bonds in Frankfurt and Amsterdam."* Then, says Mr. Wells, Joseph left for Europe with a clutch of Union bonds and "achieved success far beyond his dreams. Not only did he dispose of substantial quantities of government bonds and treasury notes, but he was able to arouse considerable sympathy for the Union cause ... and did more than anyone else on record to establish and maintain its credit abroad.... He ... placed enormous quantities of bonds in Frankfurt, Munich, Berlin, and Amsterdam ... a small amount in Paris ... a fair market for them in England." Wells winds up saying that of the \$510 million worth of bonds

placed between February, 1862, and June, 1864, “more than \$250,000,000 were placed abroad, and the Seligmans disposed of more than half this amount, contributing to the sale of a major portion of the other half by their incessant propaganda in favor of the Union cause.” This account has become further inflated by another historian, W. E. Dodd, who has called Joseph’s bond-selling “equal perhaps to the service of the general who stopped Lee at Gettysburg.”

Linton Wells has also written that Joseph Seligman, during a visit with President Lincoln, “persuaded” Lincoln to put Grant in charge of the Union forces, which Lincoln of course did.

These constitute sizable claims, and subsequent Seligman generations have cooperated with Messrs. Wells and Dodd in carrying on the legend that Joseph Seligman won the Civil War by paying for it. Unfortunately, no records exist which quite bear out these claims. Treasury records for the Civil War period are incomplete, and Seligman records on this score are now lost. Joseph did visit Lincoln and Chase in 1862, but the subject and outcome of their conversation were not recorded. (Joseph may very well have gone to beg them to *stop* paying him with Union bonds.) Joseph *was* in Europe during the months following, but if he was achieving success “beyond his dreams,” his letters home don’t show it. He hardly mentions Union bonds at all. He seems much more interested in an idea that had been growing in his mind—to set up an international Seligman banking house, a house designed along the lines of the House of Rothschild, a house whose style was represented in America only by August Belmont. But first Joseph would have to wait out the war. In January, 1864, he wrote: “Should we conclude to go into Banking, my presence in Europe during this summer and winter may be necessary to put things into train for the Banking business. The fact that I have done little or nothing up to this time is no proof of my inability to effect something, but arose out of our cautiousness not to enter into anything during war time.” (“Up to this time,” of course, includes the time Joseph supposedly had sold Union bonds in the hundreds of millions’ worth, yet Joseph seems apologetic, almost defensive, about having done “little or nothing.”)

For a great propagandist of the Union cause, Joseph’s letters during the early war years are oddly gloomy and pessimistic about the Union’s chances of winning. In 1863 he confided to his friend Wolf Goodhart that

he didn't much care which side won the war; he simply wanted it to be over, so he could set up his banking house. As a booster of American credit abroad, he took this stand in a letter to his brother William: "As I have so often said, the wealth of the country is being decimated and people are rich in imagination only. Calif. is the only exception up to this time. Query, how long will it last even there?" (To bolster his sagging morale, William Seligman wrote hurriedly back: "The Cal. capital has swelled to \$900,000.")

At one optimistic point, Joseph bought some Union bonds for his own portfolio, then quickly became discouraged about their prospects and wrote: "I am almost tempted to resell the U.S. Stock which I bought and keep my hands clear of the present degenerated American race." His brother James was more hopeful and wrote suggesting that the brothers buy \$100,000 worth of Union securities for their own accounts. Joseph turned him down. "Do not be afraid," he answered, "that the Government will want no more money after the 1 June—even if the South should have been whipped so badly as to offer to make peace, the Gov't will need hundreds if not thousands of millions yet, to pay for claims of all description and for the purpose of emancipating the Negro."

From money, Joseph's Civil War letters turn to homely family matters: "Hope Bro. Wm's Ida has entirely recovered from her indisposition.... Hope Bro. Abrm has safely reached N.Y. and if he finds no suitable match I will go with him on a *Brautschau* in Germany. I have so far not found the proper article yet."

Of Grant he makes almost no mention. True, Grant was Jesse's and Henry's friend more than he was Joseph's. And Joseph was significantly silent on one piece of news that must have reached him from America—Grant's famous Order No. 11, which expelled Jews from behind the Union lines, an action that has never been satisfactorily explained. In 1863, however, when some Republicans were opposing Lincoln's re-election and were offering Grant as a substitute, Joseph commented angrily: "I see the *d*—*d* Herald nominates Grant. This is probably done to cause a split between Lincoln and Grant."

This much, however, of Joseph's Union bond-selling is known. Early in Lincoln's *second* administration, in 1865, William Fessenden, who succeeded Chase as Secretary of the Treasury, announced a \$400 million

issue of new government notes. Joseph Seligman headed a group of German bankers in New York who wished to underwrite \$50 million worth of these notes, but the Secretary would not accept the terms of the syndicate. Thereupon, the Seligman brothers took an active part in selling these Federal securities themselves, and it is recorded that they sold over \$60 million worth.

But this, of course, was in another part of the Civil War forest: the tide of the war had already turned against the South; the Union's financial climate had brightened both in the North and in Europe; and it was a different bond issue.

For Mayer, the Montgomery-based Lehman, the war meant that his cotton business would have to be modified if it was to survive. Some cotton could still be shipped North. Chinks in the blockade appeared periodically, and small shipments could be sneaked through. Cotton could also be sent to New York, expensively, via England. But the main need was for warehouses where Southern cotton could be stored for the duration of the war. Mayer approached a merchant named John Wesley Durr, a partner in a firm which owned the Alabama Warehouse. Mayer and Durr formed a partnership called Lehman, Durr & Company, and bought the Alabama Warehouse.

Among Mayer Lehman's close friends were such Confederate celebrities as Thomas Hill Watts, wartime Governor of Alabama and, for a time, Attorney General under President Jefferson Davis (Watts called Mayer Lehman "one of the best Southern patriots"). Another friend was the Confederate political leader, Hilary A. Herbert (after whom Mayer would name his youngest son, Herbert H. Lehman). As Joseph Seligman had done in the North, Mayer offered his services to the Confederacy "to assist in every way possible."

In 1864 the South was agitated by reports that captured soldiers were being starved and brutalized in Union prisons (similar rumors about Confederate barbarity were stirring up the North), and the Alabama Legislature authorized Governor Watts to spend half a million dollars for the relief of Alabama captives. A plan was devised. A shipment of cotton would be sent through enemy lines to New York, accompanied by an agent. In New York the cotton would be sold and the agent, after deducting his

commission, would buy and distribute blankets, medicines, and provisions to the prisoners from the proceeds. Mayer Lehman, who was eager to see how his brother in the North was faring, offered to be this agent, despite the “extreme hazard” of the operation. Watts agreed, and wrote to President Davis, saying of Mayer: “He is a foreigner, but has been here fifteen years and is thoroughly identified with us. It will be necessary for him to go through the lines. I ask that he may be furnished with the proper passports and indorsed by you as the Agent of the State of Alabama.” Jefferson Davis complied, drew up the requested papers, and some fifteen hundred bales of cotton were actually shipped to Mobile to await Union permission for their transportation, along with Mayer, through the lines.

That this plan—which, today, seems to have been conceived in wonderful innocence—should have failed is no surprise. Still, in January, 1865, we find Mayer Lehman writing a polite letter to the Commander of the Union Armies, General Grant, requesting safe conduct through the battle lines and saying: “We well know what a gallant soldier must feel for those brave men, who by the fortunes of war are held prisoners exposed to the rigors of climate to which they are not accustomed, the severities of which are augmented by the privations necessarily attendant upon their condition.” The letter could not have been more diplomatic. But Grant must have thought the whole scheme utterly dotty—or perhaps fishy. Why should Mayer Lehman, one of the South’s leading cotton merchants, be concerned with shivering prisoners and Northern weather? As far as Grant could see, all Lehman wanted to do was sell his cotton in the Northern market. In any case, Grant did not answer Mayer’s letter. Two weeks later, Mayer wrote again, enclosing a copy of the original communication. This was not answered, either.

Washington in the meantime, which Mayer had no way of knowing, had embarked upon a tough policy of attrition against the South, designed to wear the rebels down and end the war quickly. In April came Lee’s surrender, and before the Federal troops moved into Montgomery over 88,000 bales of cotton were set to the torch, including the entire inventory of the Alabama Warehouse Company.

Emanuel Lehman in the North, after the initial blow of Lincoln’s blockade, was able to carry on his business through the war, in a limited

way. He sold what cotton made its way through the blockade from Mayer, and agented shipments that came by way of England, which he visited several times. In London he found an atmosphere more cordial to his Southern sympathies than in New York. Mayer wrote to him there suggesting that, through connections with men like Watts and Herbert, Emanuel might like to be an agent for the sale of Confederate bonds. Emanuel found the European market for Southern securities—during the early stages of the war, at least—considerably better than for Northern ones.

In London, Emanuel Lehman and Joseph Seligman encountered one another, each with his supply of bonds, two salesmen for two warring powers. Their manner toward each other was cool, reserved. Though both men were loyal to their respective causes in the “unholy rebellion,” as it was called, they were not really in the business of fighting a war. They were in the business of making money.

Up to the outbreak of the war, August Belmont had been financial adviser to the President of the United States. During the war’s first months, Lincoln leaned on Belmont for Rothschild money as heavily as Gitterman and the Quartermaster Corps leaned on the Seligmans for uniforms. This placed Belmont in an awkward position. Reflecting the general frame of mind in Europe, the Rothschilds had grave doubts about the North’s chances of winning, and gave Belmont and the United States Treasury only lukewarm and hesitant support. Lincoln’s fund-raisers were forced to look for new sources of supply, and found them in the bond-selling efforts of such men as Joseph Seligman. As the war progressed, affection for Belmont in Washington declined and esteem for Seligman grew. By the war’s end, though he may not have actually “won the war,” Joseph Seligman was very dear to Washington’s heart.

Obviously, this was the moment for Joseph to put his great plan to work. Within hours of Lee’s surrender, Joseph had summoned his brothers together to organize the international banking House of Seligman. The house would span the American continent and sweep across the face of Europe. Each brother would be given an assignment suitable to his temperament and talents. William Seligman, who had bought the portentous clothing factory and who loved good food and wine, would be placed in charge of Paris. Henry, who had remained in Germany longest of all the brothers, was given Frankfurt. Isaac, the first Seligman to meet a President,

was assigned to London and told to do everything possible to meet the Rothschilds. Joseph, James, and Jesse—whose old friend Grant was the American hero of the day—would remain in New York. Abraham and Leopold, whom Joseph by now knew to be the least competent of his brothers, were assigned to San Francisco, a city, now that the great gold wave was subsiding, that had become of less importance. The House of Seligman was a frank copy of the House of Rothschild, and Joseph admitted it. After all, what other models were there?

J. & W. Seligman & Company, World Bankers, was officially born. But an even more meaningful moment occurred a few days later when Joseph was walking down Nassau Street. Coming from the opposite direction, with the patrician limp from the old dueling wound that had become his trademark, was none other than the great man himself, August Belmont. As Belmont approached, he looked at Joseph, smiled slightly, touched his silk hat, said, “Hullo, Seligman,” and limped on. Joseph knew that he had arrived.

That evening Joseph bought his wife a present. It must be remembered that the 1860’s were not a period of great taste. It was the era of the whatnot, the figurine, the antimacassar, the rubber plant, and the piano sweltering beneath a Spanish shawl. Joseph’s gift to Babet was considered one of the decorative “musts” of the day—a gold-plated rolling pin, designed to show that its owner “no longer made her own bread, but was financially able to endure the strain of purchasing ready-made loaves at the grocer’s.”

The war was over. The boom was on. In the South the cotton market was reviving, and soon the Seligmans opened another office in New Orleans. It was there that Joseph Seligman achieved a remarkable feat of postwar diplomacy. He invited General Ulysses S. Grant, former Commander of the Northern Forces, and Brigadier General Pierre Gustave Beauregard, former Commander of the Southern Army of the Potomac, the man who directed the firing on Fort Sumter, to dinner.

Certainly it is one of the great tragedies in Civil War history that the dinner-table conversation *chez* Seligman was not recorded. But it is known that dinner started with “delicious little prawns from the gulf,” and that the two generals “chatted amiably.” Grant drank rather a lot of Alsatian wine and, at one point, wanted to sing. After dinner the two generals played

snooker in the billiard room. Grant lost, then the two old enemies went for a brief stroll, arm in arm, through the starlit garden while Joseph Seligman smiled benignly on.

*In 1931 Wells, a former Seligman staff member, completed a thousand-page manuscript, "The Story of the House of Seligman." Never published, it reposes in the New-York Historical Society Library.

PART III

**INTO THE MAINSTREAM 1866–
1899**

PEDDLERS IN TOP HATS

James Truslow Adams calls the years following the Civil War “The Age of the Dinosaurs.” In it, fortunes would amass in America on a scale never before imagined. Twenty years earlier there had not been five men in the United States worth as much as five million dollars, and there were less than twenty worth one million. Soon a New York newspaper would report that there were several hundred men in the city of New York alone who were worth at least a million, and some who were worth more than twenty million. The fortunes, furthermore, were being made in ways never before heard of—from steel mills, steam engines, and oil from the Pennsylvania hills. Telegraph lines were stretching across the country, the Cattle Kingdom was opening in the West, railroads were being built furiously and recklessly—parallel to each other and at cross-purposes with each other—to tie the sources of wealth together, and entrepreneurs from all over America were descending on New York to tap the money market.

To Old Guard New York, the situation was alarming. George Templeton Strong, a diarist of the period, bemoaned the “oil-rich shoddyites” from out of town who invaded the city,* and wrote:

How New York has fallen off during the last forty years! Its intellect and culture have been diluted and swamped by a great flood-tide of material wealth ... men whose bank accounts are all they rely on for social position and influence. As for their ladies, not a few who were driven in the most sumptuous turnouts, with liveried servants, looked as if they might have been cooks or chambermaids a few years ago.

The ladies in their snappy turnouts and the men with their expanding bank accounts appeared to care nothing about the things that mattered to

people like Mr. Strong. They seemed to consider “background” unnecessary. As a character called Mrs. Tiffany in the play *Fashion*, an ex-milliner whose husband had struck oil, commented, “Forget what we *have* been, it is enough to remember that we *are* of the *upper ten thousand*.”

Central Park had been carved out of the middle of Manhattan in 1856; if this move had been delayed for as little as ten years, there probably would have been no park at all; the land would have become too precious. Now the winding roads through the park became avenues where ladies paraded ritually every afternoon for the world to envy and admire. The park’s bridle paths made riding fashionable, though a Miss King complained that she received “disapproving glares” from the windows of the Union Club when she drove by, behind her own little pony phaeton. Men such as Theodore Roosevelt and DeLancey Kane used the park to show off their dashing four-in-hand coaches.

Society still lived well below the park, on lower Fifth Avenue, and Ward McAllister had announced that he really could not bother “to run society” north of Fiftieth Street (the park began at Fifty-ninth). Along lower Fifth, however, the mansions of Astors, Vanderbilts, Webbs, Jays, Roosevelts, Morgans, Morrises, Newbolds, and Rhinelanders were a marvelous fairyland of spired, turreted, gabled, and minareted castles in styles borrowed from every place and period imaginable. It all added up to “New York aesthetic,” and the street dazzled visitors. In New York drawing rooms Eastlake furniture with its cut-out gilt designs was being replaced by Venetian Gothic. Stylish decorative touches included elaborate vases filled with cattails, Japanese fans, and medieval suits of armor. Embroidery was fashionable, and heavy embroidered “throws” were draped languidly across velvet chairs and sofas. In the rich suburbs—Westchester County led in chic—it was the era of the cast-iron lawn animal—the deer, the elk, and the Saint Bernard dog being the beasts most favored.

It was an era when a display of wealth was considered perfectly proper. A fashion note was the “peek-a-boo” ladies’ shirtwaist, which allowed the wealthy lady to display a bit of herself along with her costly clothes. A great deal of formality, even stiffness, characterized all social occasions. Society families dressed for dinner even when dining alone. Food was heavy, plentiful, but unimaginative—August Belmont’s meals were an exception—and eight-course family dinners were no surprise. It was an era

so well tended that guests, arriving at the Frank Vanderlips for dinner on the wrong evening, were, to spare them embarrassment, not advised of their mistake, and were simply ushered in to a customary eight-courser. The calling-card ritual became so elaborate that only a few people could remember all its rules, and most women had to keep the little manual in their reticules to look up which corner of which the card should be turned down for which occasion and so on. Symbolic of the heaviness of the period was the moment at the ball given for the visiting Prince of Wales in 1860 when the ballroom floor started to collapse from the weight of the gathering and had to be hastily shored up from beneath.

It was a society also that was eager to classify itself, to decide who was who, who “mattered” and who didn’t. The personality of Ward McAllister suited this new attitude perfectly—he may even have invented it. McAllister had decided that there were two elements of importance in New York—the “nobs,” as he called them, or the old families who had more position than money, and the “swells,” a newer-rich group who “had to entertain and be smart” in order to hold their own. A Morris or Van Rensselaer, in other words, was a nob. A Vanderbilt was a swell. McAllister decided that a coalition society should be formed out of these two groups, in order to form “a fixed upper class” that would resist the invasions of “profiteers, boorish people, people with only money.” McAllister did not say that this included people like the Seligmans, but the implication was clear.

McAllister’s formula was as good as any, and, since society needed formulas to reassure itself of its importance, it was adopted. There were no Jews at all in McAllister’s combined group,* and the unspoken sentiment began to be felt that, though Jewish bankers would be tolerated in the financial community of Wall Street, they would not be welcomed on Fifth Avenue. New York’s patrician Sephardic families quickly noticed that their names were not included in McAllister’s collection either. Some Sephardim expressed relief at this. But others resented it. They blamed the new exclusivity on the behavior of the “loud, aggressive, new-rich Germans.” To the Sephardim, the Germans had become the toplofty, arrogant “Mrs. Tiffanys.”

Society might be able to overlook the German Jews, but the business community no longer could. The Seligmans were a fact of Wall Street life,

and now the Lehmans began to emerge. Despite the setbacks of the war, the Lehmans had quickly revived their cotton business. Emanuel re-established himself in Fulton Street, and Mayer—with his Southern partner, Mr. Durr—reassembled Lehman, Durr & Company in Montgomery, and simultaneously opened Lehman, Newgass & Company in New Orleans (with his brother-in-law, Benjamin Newgass), once again around the corner from the Seligmans. Montgomery was the center of the Alabama-Georgia-Piedmont cotton trade, while New Orleans served the rich Mississippi-Louisiana area. In 1866 nearly a third of the cotton shipped from American ports passed through the port of New Orleans, and in the inflationary postwar period cotton soared to the unprecedented price of fifty cents a pound. But New York was still the money capital of cotton, and in 1868 Mayer Lehman decided to join his brother, leaving Newgass and Durr to handle affairs in the South. Lehman Brothers took new offices in Pearl Street, just off Hanover Square, center of the cotton trade.

One thing was noticed that had not been apparent before: the two brothers looked almost exactly alike, with bright eyes, full beards, and high foreheads. The effect of twinship created the impression of one Lehman being several places at once, and their attitudes of bounce, ebullience, and good nature soon earned them the quaint nickname of “the Cheeryble Brothers.” (In their portraits which hang in the partners’ room at Lehman Brothers, they do not look very Cheeryble; they look properly bankerly and stern, but doubtless being together after a long separation made them Cheeryble in 1868. At Lehman Brothers the bearded faces in the partners’ room are called “the Smith Brothers,” since there is a certain resemblance to the cough drop pair.)

But appearances can be deceptive. Temperamentally, the brothers were quite different, Emanuel the “inside” money man, Mayer the outgoing contact-maker. Emanuel was conservative and cautious, Mayer speculative and bold. Members of the family have said that Emanuel would study the financial picture and say, “It’s a good time to sell.” Mayer would look at the same evidence and say, “It’s a good time to buy.” Once, at the height of a panic on the Cotton Exchange, Mayer was seen striding out of his office in silk hat, frock coat, and striped trousers, with his heavy gold watch fob swinging at his waist, wielding his gold-handled stick and wearing a smile on his face and a general air of confidence. A young associate ran up to him

and said, “Mr. Lehman, aren’t you *worried?*” Mayer replied, “My dear young man, I see you have had no experience with a falling market,” and strode on. Others in the family summed up their differences, saying, “Mayer makes the money and Emanuel conserves it.” (In the portraits, one notices that Emanuel wears a dark and sober cravat; optimistic Mayer wears a jaunty, Cheeryble bow tie.)

Nor were the Seligmans and Lehmans the only immigrants in New York who were making the great transition from peddling and store-keeping in the provinces to banking in the big city. Now, in 1867, the downtown financial district noticed a new firm called Kuhn, Loeb & Company, and its top-hatted little proprietor, Solomon Loeb. At his wife’s insistence, Loeb had moved from Cincinnati—the “Porkopolis” she hated—had bought a brownstone in East Thirty-eighth Street (though he was warned that it was “too far uptown” and was “sure to be a bad investment”), and had opened his private banking offices in Nassau Street. The firm had a starting capital of \$500,000, and the original Kuhn, Loeb partners were listed as “A. Kuhn, J. Netter, S. Kuhn, S. Loeb, S. Wolff”—all relatives. (Loeb’s original partner in the Cincinnati clothing business, Abraham Kuhn, soon retired from the firm and returned permanently to Germany.)

Marcus Goldman, another cloak-and-suiter, also yielded to his wife, and removed her from the city *she* disliked so much, which was Philadelphia. In New York, Goldman hung out a shingle in Pine Street announcing that he was now “Marcus Goldman, Banker and Broker.” The Goldmans entered the brownstone world of Murray Hill, and joined the group of families whose spiritual center was Temple Emanu-El, and whose acknowledged social leaders were named Seligman.

Marcus Goldman’s downtown “office,” like those of most fledgling bankers of the day, was in sharp contrast to the way he lived uptown (around the corner from the Astors) and the way he dressed. Sumptuous downtown offices were still a long way off, and Marcus’ was a cellar room next to a coal chute. In these dim quarters he installed a stool, a desk, and a wizened part-time bookkeeper (who worked afternoons for a funeral parlor).

In what was the standard banker’s uniform—tall silk hat and Prince Albert frock coat—Marcus Goldman started off each morning to visit his friends and acquaintances among the wholesale jewelers in Maiden Lane,

and in the “Swamp,” where the hide and leather merchants were located. Marcus carried his business in his hat. He knew a merchant’s chief need: cash. Since rates on loans from commercial banks were high, one means New York’s small merchants had of obtaining cash was to sell their promissory notes or commercial paper* to men like Marcus at a discount. Commercial paper was then being discounted at 8 to 9 percent, and Marcus purchased these notes in amounts ranging from \$2,500 to \$5,000 and tucked the valuable bits of paper inside the inner band of his hat for safekeeping. As his morning progressed, his hat sat higher and higher above his forehead.

Then, in the afternoon, he would head uptown to the commercial banks. He would call on the Commercial Bank in Chambers Street, the Importers & Traders in Warren Street, or the National Park Bank in John Street. He would see the cashier, or perhaps the president, deferentially remove his hat, and they would begin to dicker.

Marcus was doing what Solomon Loeb was doing, what the Lehmans were doing with their cotton bills, and what the Seligmans were doing on a somewhat grander scale with their bonds (which in essence are simply government, or industry, promises to pay). Marcus, however, didn’t seem to need partners. From the very beginning, he was able to sell as much as five million dollars’ worth of commercial paper a year.

Bertha Goldman was able to afford, in 1869, one of the “sumptuous turnouts with liveried servants” described by Mr. Strong to take her on her morning rounds of shopping and errands. But Marcus chose to walk. So did Solomon Loeb. So did the Lehmans and the Seligmans. “Trading on the Street” meant just that. As the pedestrian bankers met each other, they bowed to each other solemnly. On their daily tours they appraised the altitudes of each other’s hats.

Walking was becoming a tradition among the Jewish bankers. They all had wives who believed in feeding their husbands hearty breakfasts, enormous midday meals, and Lucullan dinners. Walking countered some of the effects of these. There was a point of dignity, too. Carriages were for lazy men and men of little consequence. The splendor of the conveyance could dim the splendor of the passenger folded up within. Walking toughened the physical and moral fiber, but it was also a social form of locomotion. Walking, a man could meet his friends. Afoot, he could keep

abreast of what the competition was doing. One did business while one walked, and one walked even when one sailed. In a few years' time, Jacob Schiff—who would tower above every financial figure in Wall Street—would be able to boast that he had made a million dollars while doing his morning constitutional about the deck of the *Berengeria*. (The Jewish bankers were remarkable among nineteenth-century travelers because they *talked* to people; gentile society of the period was antisocial when it traveled, afraid of strangers, foreigners, parvenus, and other dangerous shipboard alliances.)

Of course it also may have been true that the bankers walked out of habit. The grandiose phrase for men like Marcus Goldman, Solomon Loeb, and the Seligmans was “merchant bankers.” But they were, in many ways, still peddlers covering their routes, only now they were peddling IOU's.

* Mr. Strong himself, however, owned ten thousand shares of Kenzula Petroleum.

* Unless, of course, a persistent bit of gossip one still hears in New York is true—that the Astors themselves were originally Jewish. There is also a little band of old New York families who make the same assertion about the Vanderbilts.

* One way to visualize a piece of “commercial paper” is to think of a post-dated check. If, today, you drew a check for \$100 dated six months from now, based on funds you expected to have by then, you would find few people who would give you a full \$100 for that piece of paper. But you might find someone willing to pay you \$90, and that person, in turn, might find a more affluent source willing to buy it from him for \$95. It is illegal to trade personal checks this way, but commercially it is quite a legal operation.

THE “OUR DEAR BABETTE” SYNDROME

By the war’s end Joseph Seligman’s wife had presented him with a total of nine children, five boys and four girls. Joseph’s brothers and sisters, and their wives and husbands, were following Joseph’s prolific example, and having seven, eight, nine, even thirteen children apiece. From the original eleven immigrant Seligmans, the combined Seligman family—husbands, wives, and children—had swollen to number 104, or, as Joseph reminded his brothers, a profit in people of 845 percent.

Dynastic Joseph mother-henned all the pregnancies in the family, which was quite a job since there were often several at once. Naturally he preferred male children to female, and he seems very nearly to have gotten his way. Of eighty-two Seligman children, forty-four were boys. The Seligman children also defied infant-mortality rates of the period. Of the four score plus who composed the second generation, only two did not live to maturity. This healthy and numerous tribe would, one might think, provide personnel to staff an operation of almost any size.

There was only one trouble, one which affects all dynasties, and one which New York German Jewish families, who drew an equation between the family and the business, would all encounter. Joseph encountered it early, long before he was required to tackle the job of fitting sons, sons-in-law, nephews, and nephews-in-law into the slots he had ordained for them. No sooner had he got his transatlantic and transcontinental table of organization set up, with each brother-in-law and brother in his appointed place, than he discovered he had men who were unhappy at, or unequal to,

their duties. There was Max Stettheimer, for instance, Joseph's sister Babette's husband.

The position of a Seligman sister was a difficult one to begin with. She was totally dependent on her brothers for money, and though they were generous, it was in a high-handed way which left the girls in the dark as to how wealthy the family really was. Monetary matters were considered damaging to a woman's brain, and so the Seligman brothers spared their womenfolk all financial details that they believed were beyond their grasp. Whenever business went badly, the women's allowances would be cut, but never with an explanation. The women resented this, but there was nothing they could do. The men were making the money, and were their benefactors.

Babette's position was particularly unhappy. Max Stettheimer was a stolid but colorless man, moody and uncommunicative, and such life as they had together was passed in a kind of upholstered silence. Max, apparently, was fond of sitting. In letters of the time, whenever reference is made to Max—and there are very few—it is with the comment, "Max sat there." There is a possibility that he was not very bright. Max and his father were importers by training and tradition. Buying and selling goods was a process Max understood. But the intricacies of finance—factoring, bond-selling, moneylending—eluded him. Early in his marriage to Babette, Joseph had placed Max in the St. Louis store, where he had worked with William. But now, nearly twenty years later, when Joseph was ready to abandon storekeeping altogether and go into international banking, Max dug in his heels. Joseph's plan was to send Max to Paris with William. But Max did not want to go to Paris, or into banking, or to work with William.

Taking Max's side was Max's father, Jacob Stettheimer, who had joined the Seligman enterprises when his son married into the clan, and adding her support to the Stettheimer faction was Jacob Stettheimer's wife. The senior Mrs. Stettheimer was jealous of the Seligmans, and disapproved of the way Babette was raising her children. And so Joseph tried to move forward with his grand design, while all the Stettheimers lined up against all the Seligmans.

The situation grew stickier daily. At home Max complained to Babette that her brother was "against" him, was trying to "lord it" over him, and "wants to push me around." Babette tried to intercede with Joseph on her

husband's behalf, and Joseph explained to Babette that if she had any loyalty to her family she would get Max—and Max's father—to do as they were told. "After all, we have made Max a rich man," he reminded his sister.

Unwisely, Babette carried this message back to Max, who thereupon presented Joseph with an ultimatum. If he and his father were not allowed to continue their importing business unhampered by Joseph, they would leave Joseph's organization altogether. Max then told Babette that if he and the Seligmans parted company he would never permit her to see any of her brothers and sisters—who were her whole life—again. In desperation, Joseph turned to William for help, writing:

Max insists that we go into importing again. And if we do not enter into it as largely as of old he will get other partners. Nothing would please me more, were it not for our dear Babette who says as soon as Max ceases business connections with us, she will face a life more insupportable than hitherto, and begs of me to try to keep him in. If only for her sake I deem it my duty, provided I cannot place him in Paris or Frankfurt as I would prefer, to commence importing again.

William had a practical suggestion. The dispute, he hinted, might be settled in some other area—specifically the money area. Sure enough, Max had his price, and so did Jacob. A sum was given to Jacob—enough to establish him in an importing business of his own. Another sum, in the form of a larger share of the business, went to Max, who, in turn, agreed to join Henry in Frankfurt. As another concession to Max, and to please Babette, Joseph agreed to change the name of the Frankfurt house to Seligman & Stettheimer and to let Max engage in importing and exporting on the side. It would not be true, of course, to say that this made everybody happy. It was a makeshift arrangement, costly to Joseph and one which Max had accepted only grudgingly.

At the same time, Joseph was trying to cope with a different family problem in San Francisco. He had long realized that artistic Leopold needed a firm hand to guide him. He had assumed that in the West Coast office Abraham would provide this. But it soon turned out that this was not to be the case. Neither Abraham nor Leopold seemed to know what he was doing. While Leopold daydreamed over his sketch pad, Abraham—who at

least undertook every project with great enthusiasm—embarked upon a long series of bungling, lightheaded, and expensive mistakes. An incompetent brother-in-law was bad enough, but to have two blood brothers who were no good at banking was inconceivable.

To Joseph, everything was a question of learning, as he himself had learned, and so, patiently, he began trying to teach Abraham banking by mail. “You are, of course, green yet in the banking business, as we were a few years ago,” Joseph wrote from New York, “and it is only through extraordinary caution, trusting no one, except we knew from our knowledge that he was safe *beyond all doubt*, that we got along without making heavy losses.” But Abraham and Leopold apparently trusted everybody, and Joseph kept having to spell things out for them: “The main thing in a banker is safety, with ability to reach his money at a moment’s call.... The subject of taking deposits is rather a risky one, inasmuch as depositors can (and will, in times of panics) call for all their deposits, which is enough to break any but the very strongest banks. You will at first not take deposits on call from anyone.” He outlined his creed, which was to stay, at all times, as financially liquid as possible: “Never lend money without a security which you can sell at any time. *Never endorse or go security for a living man.*” (By this, of course, Joseph did not mean that his brothers should endorse dead men; he meant that they should back *businesses*, not people, since human beings are seldom negotiable.) On and on Joseph went, explaining the rudiments of banking, trying to put the obvious in the clearest possible terms. But the two brothers never seemed quite to grasp what Joseph was talking about. They were not helped, either, by being married to the socially ambitious Levi sisters, who conspired to keep their husbands’ heads turned toward affairs other than business.

When Abraham Seligman should have been buying, he sold. When he should have sold, he bought. Finally a despairing Joseph wrote to him:

I am afraid, dear Abe, you are not smart enough for the California bankers and brokers, for whenever gold goes up you appear to get stuck with currency, and whenever it goes down you “cannot get much.” You must be wide awake and if you don’t get correct quotations daily from here we will telegraph you daily or whenever a change directs.

But apparently even the daily telegrams did not help. In the summer of 1867 Joseph decided to trim the San Francisco operation, and wrote, still hoping somehow to make at least Leopold a banker: “After collecting up, we may probably get Brother Leopold to take hold of some other branch of our banking business,” and, a few days later, added gloomily:

Brother Abe will join Brother Leopold in endeavoring to collect up all that is due us, getting everything which cannot be collected in good shape, but expect you to grant no unnecessary indulgence, so that we do not lose much interest, as we already lose enough on selling the stock ... \$500,000 worth of goods is alone a loss of \$100,000. Therefore, I trust there will be no interest lost on debts and everything collected up close.

Joseph then shipped Abraham to Frankfurt to join Henry and Max, and Leopold to London to join Isaac. It was hardly the arrangement Joseph wanted. He now had two ineffectual operatives, Abraham and Max, in his Frankfurt office. Who to handle Seligman affairs in the American West would be a continuing problem. And the whole Abraham-Leopold adventure in San Francisco had been far more expensive than mollifying Max and “our dear Babette.” Furthermore, the “our dear Babette” syndrome—Joseph’s feeling that it was his duty to provide places for relatives in his business no matter how meager their talents were—would go on plaguing him for years to come. Bankers, it seems, are born, not made.

“GETTING OUR FEET WET”

Men were getting rich, but the American Government’s financial state remained precarious during the early Reconstruction period. In 1866 there was less than a hundred million dollars in the U.S. Treasury, yet the public debt was edging rapidly toward the three-thousand-million mark. Hugh McCulloch, Secretary of the Treasury under both Lincoln and Johnson, was an experienced financier (he had served as Comptroller of Currency during the war) who understood bankers, and bankers understood him. His postwar plans for the economy included payment of short-term government obligations by issuing and selling long-term bonds, payable in ten to forty years. The Seligmans, for their bond-selling efforts during the war, were offered a large share of McCulloch’s new bonds to sell. “Patriotism directs that we accept this assignment,” Joseph wrote his brothers. There was also a commission to be earned from selling bonds, though it was a small one.

Joseph took the assignment, and the bonds sold well, but in the meantime he looked around for more exciting ways to make money. One piece of business floating around New York in 1867 was \$450,000 worth of stock in the New York Mutual Gas Light Company, an early ancestor of the Consolidated Edison Company. Nobody thought much of this stock, which sold for pennies a share. Shares were traded for drinks at local saloons. But two men thought the stock had promise. One was Cornelius Vanderbilt, Sr. The other was Joseph Seligman. Joseph began buying up New York Mutual shares from bartenders as he made teetotaling rounds about the city. Presently the company was laying twenty-four-inch gas mains under the city streets. The value of the stock climbed to five million dollars and was selling for \$100 a share. The Seligmans and “Old Vanderbilt,” as Joseph affectionately called him, made a tidy million dollars each.

It wasn't any special "shrewdness" that made Joseph invest in issues like this. It was more like beginner's luck. Indeed, it is one of the phenomena of the Stock Market that some men seem naturally to be lucky in it while others simply are not. Joseph's heirs and assigns today wince at mention of the far more lucrative opportunities he turned down. Just prior to the New York Mutual Gas bonanza, Joseph was advised that all the land north of Sixtieth Street and west of Broadway—up to 121st Street, where Grant's Tomb now stands, and including most of what is now West End Avenue and Riverside Drive—was for sale. The price for this tract was \$450,000—more than three square miles of Manhattan for a fraction of what a single city block would cost now. It was perhaps the best bargain since Peter Minuit's original purchase of the island from the Indians. Joseph had the money, but said no. "It is a bad investment." Had he felt otherwise, the Seligmans today would easily be the richest family in the world. Again he was showing his distaste for tying up money in anything that could not be sold quickly and his distrust of real estate. (In closing his San Francisco store, he had simply given the land to the city rather than go to the trouble of trying to sell it.)

From the beginning, the German Jewish bankers backed the riskier issues, but this was not because they preferred them to issues with less risk. Each issue that came into their hands had a little extra risk built in. The older-established, more conservative New England-bred bankers had Old School ties with the older-established, more conservative, less risky companies. They shied away from newer and more speculative ventures and, for reasons of prestige, avoided all cheap stocks. "Let the Jews have that one" was the saying on the Street. This was not anti-Semitism exactly. "Old Vanderbilt," though he wasn't Jewish, was equally a parvenu in the 1860's and was in the same position as the Jews. It was simply that the older houses could pick and choose, and the newer bankers pawed through the leftovers like ladies at a bargain sale. "Do not worry, as we are still getting our feet wet," Joseph Seligman reassured his brothers when things went wrong—as happened frequently.

The New Orleans operation, under brother-in-law Max Hellman, was doing particularly well, thanks to the resumption of cotton trade. "The financing of imports in a period of reconstruction, the discounting of cotton bills—what an opportunity for addition to the Seligman fortune!" Joseph had written in 1865. By 1867 the prediction was coming true. Max Hellman

was a stern-faced, square-jawed young man with a bristling mustache and heavy eyebrows. He had been born in Munich. “Max,” Joseph wrote of Henriette Seligman’s brother, “is a selfish man in some ways”—but selfishness is not always a negative quality in a trader. On the plus side, Joseph said, “Max has the kind of manners that will be liked in Southern Society.” This seemed to be true also. Max did such a brisk business in buying and discounting cotton exchange bills that Joseph wrote him proudly: “We would say that, with the exception of Brown* and you, *we have reason to know* that every other banker *has lost money* this season in purchasing bills in New Orleans.”

But Max made mistakes. Gold bullion was still making its way from California to the Southern port, then to New York, and then to Europe, where it was again resold. And, in February, 1868, Joseph wrote to Max to say: “We received yesterday some 23 large bars, which you state to be gold and which the U.S. Assay Office returns to us as being *pure brass!* Had they been gold they would have been worth about ¼ million dollars to judge by the weight. We are glad you made no advance on them, but we had to pay freight to New York and also \$5.00 to the U.S. Assay Office for their trouble.” Joseph added: “Please be more careful in the future.”

In the fall of that year, Joseph decided that Max needed a change of air. He transferred Max to Paris to work with William, and specifically asked Max to keep an eye on William, who was being less than careful in the rendering of his accounts. The Jewish practice of making up a marriage purse for each daughter in the family when she became engaged had been instituted by Joseph, who imposed a levy on each brother based on the size of his most-recent profit statement. Joseph’s oldest daughter, Helene, had become engaged that year in New York, and William had submitted a particularly impressive statement from Paris. Joseph wrote him that his share-of-purse would therefore be considerable. William, red-faced, was forced to reply that he had lied about his profits on that statement “to save you, dear Joe, from worry in New York.” Of course William knew immediately why Joseph was sending Max to Paris, and was furious.

To replace Max in New Orleans, Joseph picked Max’s younger brother, Theodore Hellman (who later married Joseph’s daughter Frances, thereby becoming a Seligman brother-in-law and son-in-law, and weaving the Seligman-Hellman families into an even tighter web; but when he went to

New Orleans he was still a bachelor of twenty-four). Theodore was tall and slender and handsome, with curly dark sideburns and a Grecian profile. If Southern society liked Max's manners, it liked Theodore's even more. His good looks helped outweigh the fact that he was, to all intents and purposes, just another Northern carpetbagger (he rather resembled Clark Gable as Rhett Butler), and he was soon a fixture in the New Orleans party circuit.

Theodore was a believer in miracles, and was responsible for some Seligman miracles—even though, as happens with miracle workers, his miracles had a way of backfiring on him. He was superstitious. A black cat crossing his path in the morning would keep him away from the Cotton Exchange all day, and he had a phobia about the number 13. He would not sit down at a table where there were thirteen for dinner, and would not buy notes in which the number 13 appeared. He had a mystical belief in the number 24—perhaps because it was in his twenty-fourth year that he was first given a position of responsibility with the Seligmans. But, in buying only bills which contained the number 24 and refusing those that contained the number 13, he forgot that the point of it all was to buy bills in the South, at a discount, that could be sold in the North or in England at a profit. Particularly critical of Theodore's methods was quick-tempered Isaac Seligman, who had the task of trying to sell Theodore's bills in London. Isaac wrote to Joseph: "I daresay the difficulty [in New Orleans] to obtain proper bills is very great, but the difficulty here to get rid of them ... is still greater.... If Theodore cannot send us only *A-One* bills, you must find some other occupation for him!" (Theodore's behavior almost drove Isaac to a nervous breakdown, and Isaac wrote that he had "to give up walking home of an evening along the Thames Embankment for fear of taking a sudden plunge into the river, thus ending my career.")

One night in a dream, Theodore saw two numbers recur repeatedly. Waking, he wrote them down. It was the time of the great California lottery, and, assuming that these numbers represented a message from the Beyond, or at least from the West Coast, he went first thing in the morning to the lottery agency and bought the two numbers. Both were in line for the largest prizes, and cost him twenty dollars apiece. Later in the day a gentleman came to see Theodore on business and, told of the dream, persuaded Theodore to sell him one of the numbers—for twenty dollars. That number won a \$15,000 prize. But the number Theodore kept for himself, 154077

(its digits added up to 24), won the largest prize of all—\$100,000. Theodore immediately sent this sum North for the Seligmans to invest. The Seligmans were beginning to dip their toes into new railroad ventures, and Theodore's money was used to buy bonds in railroads that rather quickly went into receivership. Theodore's bonds were sold for a mere \$8,000. As far as is known, the Seligmans never apologized to poor Theodore for losing his little windfall so rapidly, and instead went right on scolding him for his "lack of sound business methods."

Actually, Northern money was so much in demand in the South that it was hard for a firm such as Seligman, Hellman & Company to lose money during the Reconstruction era. But ultimately, in 1881, Theodore, whose real problem was perhaps that he was too eager to be liked and too quick to say yes, did involve the firm in a loss when a borrower he trusted failed to repay \$20,000. He had broken one of Joseph's cardinal rules ("Never go security for a living man"). It was a small loss, but 1881 had to be Theodore's unlucky year. It was his thirteenth in New Orleans.

Joseph, however, did not always follow his own rules. In 1866 a certain S. H. Bohm of Helena operated a business that involved the appraisal, buying, and shipping of gold out of the Montana Territory. Abraham Seligman had heard of Bohm, and wrote Joseph urging him to enter into a partnership with the man. Joseph indignantly wrote back: "No profit would induce me to lend my name to anyone where I, or a brother of mine, were not present to watch!" But anyone dealing in gold interested Joseph, and Abraham's suggestion lurked in his mind. Soon he had contacted Bohm, and was writing to him cozily: "We would in order to facilitate your business and to give your house an A-1 reputation, go in as special partners with a certain amount of capital." In New York, Joseph began referring to the Bohm-Seligman enterprise as "our Montana house."

But Joseph's first hunch had been prophetic. Bohm needed watching. He began loaning the Seligmans' money without their knowledge and overdrawing on the firm's account. Joseph sent an aide, F. A. Benjamin, to Helena to look into things and was soon writing to him: "Bro. Abm telegraphs that you had discovered an additional indebtedness of \$30,000. Now I am astonished at this discovery. I have lost all confidence in Bohm. ... Now you must stop this game ... if not we must try to find places behind keys and locks for all these chaps ... these bad eggs." More embezzlements

were uncovered, and in a later letter a dazed Joseph wrote wondering, “By what process have they made away with 1/4 million of dollars in so small a place as Helena?”

If there was one thing that Joseph disliked more than losing money, it was having his honesty as a trader questioned. Allusions to Jews and “sharp practice” infuriated him. As he had done in Selma, when he encountered anti-Semitism he fought back. Thus we find him, in 1867, when his banking house was not quite three years old, writing an angry letter to a Mr. Julius Hart who had called some of the Seligman deals “questionable.” “Mr. Ridgely, a customer of ours,” wrote Joseph, who now almost always used the royal “we,” “informs us that you have made a statement to him that we had 50,000 pounds protested Exchange [bills] returned to us. The above statement being entirely untrue may still have a tendency to injure us, and we therefore ask you to retract all and every assertion of that kind made, previous to our handing the case to our lawyers.”

Joseph was increasingly touchy about anti-Semitism. One of the most important developments after the Civil War, as far as international bankers like the Seligmans were concerned, was the laying of the first transatlantic cable by Cyrus W. Field in 1866. The Seligmans’ first message on the cable was a congratulatory one to Field; their second, following the first by a few minutes, was addressed to Isaac in London: “California gold arrived will add hundred bonds after that hold up exchange unsalable—Josef.”* But cable service at first was erratic, and Joseph began to notice that his cables seemed not to arrive in London as fast as those of other bankers. Joseph sent off one of his prickliest letters—going, characteristically, to the top—to Cyrus W. Field. He enclosed a long list of late cables, and added: “We have reason to know that dispatches sent from London at the time ours were forwarded have been received by other bankers twelve to eighteen hours in advance of ours.”

His letter touched off an investigation at the Anglo-American Telegraph Company. No religious prejudice was unearthed, but it did turn out that downtown cable clerks accepted bribes from certain bankers to put their own messages through first and to delay others. A number of guilty clerks were dismissed.

Joseph, when the occasion arose, also enjoyed being magnanimous. In 1869, writing to a certain Henry Cohn of San Francisco, Joseph said: “Your

letter of the 14th to Mr. Jesse Seligman, asks us to release Mr. Sternberg from his guarantee to repay us the \$15,000 cash advanced you two years ago, and to take Mr. Lerlebach for \$13,000 instead, keeping besides Mr. Lerlebach's note, the 300 shares water stock, and you add that Brother Abe has encouraged you to address us and promised to speak a good word for you, which he actually has done, and which is natural..." And Joseph could not resist assenting to Cohn's request without a small self-congratulatory pat on the back for himself and his family, for he added: "Whoever knew of a Seligman who was not charitable and kind and served his neighbors, especially those who have been unfortunate?" (One can almost see Joseph smiling his sleepy little smile over this last touch.)

But his charitableness had its limits, nor was it in any way restricted to fellow Jews, as is clear from this poised and polished letter, written a year later, to an "unfortunate neighbor," the firm of Guiterman Brothers in Amsterdam:

During your difficulties we have abstained from addressing you on the subject of the cash loaned you, which silence on our part you no doubt appreciated? But after this long delay we deem it not indelicate to remind you that we are still in the land of the living, and that periodical remittances even in small amounts would now be very acceptable, and we are sure on reflection you will agree.

Under Presidents Lincoln and Johnson, the Seligmans had enjoyed excellent relations with three successive Secretaries of the Treasury—Salmon Chase, William Fessenden, and Hugh McCulloch. When their old friend from Watertown days, Ulysses S. Grant, took Presidential office in 1869, they had every reason to look forward to the same preferential treatment. In the beginning the auspices certainly looked good. Grant appointed as his Secretary of State Elihu B. Washburne, who as a Congressman from Illinois had been one of the Seligmans' private clients. Joseph had once purchased, in Frankfurt, 200,000 U.S. bonds for Washburne,* saying at the time, "There is no necessity for you to send any Bonds as margin, as we require none from you, dear Washburne." (Dear Washburne was one of those Congressmen particularly influential in the allocation of land for railroads, in which, as the Seligmans were getting their feet wet, they were increasingly dabbling.) As soon as Washburne was

appointed, the Seligmans wrote him, gently reminding him of their past good deeds, and offering their “full services” to the new administration.

But Washburne’s appointment, it turned out, was only a courtesy one. He held the post for only twelve days, and was then made Minister to France. Grant replaced him with Hamilton Fish, who was less a friend. As the son of a Revolutionary officer whose father had been a friend of George Washington’s and whose mother was a descendant of Peter Stuyvesant—who had once thrown every Jew in New York in jail—Fish was very much “old New York,” a social snob, and later one of the cornerstones of Mrs. Astor’s Four Hundred. Then Grant did a startling thing. He contacted Joseph privately, and said he would like to make him Secretary of the Treasury.

The offer stunned Joseph. For three days he was unable to think of a reply. He was of course flattered, and had no doubt that he could do the job. With him in Washington, his brothers would no longer have to work at making Washington friends. But there was a shy side to Joseph’s nature. He felt uneasy in the limelight, and he practiced a religion—or, as he himself always put it, “belonged to a race”—which for centuries had been disenfranchised, barred by law from politics and government office. He could not envision himself in this post. It seemed out of character to him. He was an American millionaire of fifty, but he was still a poor immigrant Jewish boy. In the end, the idea simply frightened him, and arguing the “press of business” in New York, he turned it down.

For every practical reason, he should have accepted. Grant appointed George Sewall Boutwell of Massachusetts instead, and Boutwell became a long Seligman headache.

At first, Joseph and Boutwell got along well. They worked together on a plan, carried over from the previous administration, to continue refunding the public debt, stabilizing currency, and building American credit abroad. Both men agreed on two main areas—that specie payments could not be resumed until confidence had been restored and that the high rate of interest—6 percent—then being paid on government bonds was a poor reflection on the state of American credit. With billions of dollars’ worth of bonds at stake, the mood and temperature of the bond-buying market had to be gauged with extreme caution. A fraction of an interest percentage point either way could mean the success or failure of the issue in the marketplace.

After a great deal of deliberation on the question, Joseph and Secretary Boutwell agreed that the interest rate on the new bonds should be 5 percent. Or so Joseph thought.

When Boutwell submitted his bond-issuing plan to Congress, his outline coincided with Joseph's in every major detail but one—the interest rate. The new bonds, Boutwell declared, would be offered at 4.5 percent. Joseph was flabbergasted. He hurried to Boutwell to protest that this was slashing the rate far too much and far too soon. The Seligmans, he insisted, could not sell bonds in Europe—or anywhere else—that promised such a low yield. But Boutwell was adamant. “I have decided,” he said coldly, “that four and a half is proper.” Joseph fumed.

“My father,” Edwin Seligman wrote of Joseph many years later, “was the most tolerant of men. But he was also very intolerant of anything not quite up to standard, sometimes being a little unfair to stupid people.” Fair or not, Joseph told Boutwell he was stupid.

To support his thesis, Joseph cabled his brother Henry in Frankfurt, asking him to canvass leading German bankers to see how they felt about the Boutwell plan. In Paris he asked William to sound out the formidable “Haute Banque” group—Hottinguer, Mallet, Marcuard, and De Neufville. The brothers' wires came back; the European bankers felt as Joseph did: Boutwell's “cheap” bonds would not sell in Europe; 5 percent was the lowest sensible figure.

But Boutwell, who seems at this point to have fallen in love with the figure of 4.5 percent, refused to budge. Joseph, with the consensus of European bankers in his fist, marched to individual members of Congress to try to persuade them against what he called “Boutwell's folly.” This did little to endear him to Boutwell, who complained loudly of Joseph's “unwarranted interference” with the Congress, and the coolness that had developed between the two men ripened into open hostility.

In the acts of July 14, 1870, and January 20, 1871, Congress authorized issues of bonds totaling \$1.5 billion at rates which were, in a sense, a compromise. But it was a compromise which favored the Boutwell stand. A relatively small amount—\$200 million worth—would pay 5 percent. The rest would all pay a lower rate, some as low as 3.5 percent. Joseph sulked in his Wall Street tent.

Still, in return for their help in devising the plan, at least part of which was being used, the Seligmans were certain that they would be offered a share in underwriting and selling the \$200 million worth of 5 percenters. Other New York firms thought so too, for they began approaching the Seligmans for a share of the Seligmans' share. But the Seligmans were in for a hundred-million-dollar disappointment.

In March, 1871, William Seligman in Paris wrote a bitter letter to Elihu Washburne, who, since he was no longer in the Cabinet, could not have been expected to do much about the situation, saying:

Last evening I was shocked and stunned by a telegram ... saying Mr. Boutwell has appointed as agents in Europe for the conversion of U.S. Bonds [William lists several firms, the Seligmans glaringly absent from the roster].... Thus we, contrary to our confident belief, are under the circumstances existing, slighted by our Government. We do not know what has caused us this neglect and injustice, whether it is personal aversion against us on the part of Mr. Boutwell or lack of confidence, or whether it is the work of intrigue and selfishness on the part of our competitors.

A moment's reflection should have cleared up William's mystification for him. His brother Joseph had simply been the victim of over-confidence. In his insistence that interest rates not be lowered too much and too soon, he himself had moved too quickly and high-handedly. He had overstepped himself, had stepped on toes in the process, and now was being punished for it.

But the Seligmans were, to some extent at least, able to have the last word. Boutwell capitulated somewhat, and agreed to "offer the loan to everybody." (This did not please the Seligmans much; they did not like to think of themselves as part of "everybody.") The brothers then took a clutch of bonds to sell, though Joseph commented tartly, "The whole business is doomed to failure unless more intelligence is infused into it."

He was more or less right about that. The bonds sold so poorly that Boutwell agreed to let Jay Cooke & Company form a banking syndicate to try to dispose of the unsold balance. Two selling groups were set up, one in London and one in New York, and the Seligman branches in the two cities took part in both. This time the bonds sold very well indeed, so well that

President Grant was able to announce that the issue had “established American credit abroad.” And, grudgingly, the Seligmans were able to accept a share of the responsibility for that development.

Socially, however, the Grant era was a merry time for Joseph Seligman. At Grant’s inauguration, Joseph had stood near the President on the platform when Grant took his oath of office. That evening, in full fig, Joseph showed up at the Inaugural Ball and waltzed with Julia Grant. (His modest little Babet, self-conscious about her poor command of English, always eschewed such functions.)

There were lunches and dinners at the White House, where hilarity ran high. After one of these Joseph wrote home to Babet that he had been seated next to “the most beautiful lady that I’ve ever seen, yourself excepted. It was a Mrs. Palmer from Chicago” (the famous Mrs. Potter Palmer, whose sister later married Grant’s son). At the table Mrs. Grant asked Joseph whether he had ever seen anything more beautiful. Joseph replied gallantly that he had not, but that he had a wife whom he found even more beautiful and whom he loved even more. This, Joseph told Babet, “made the President laugh heartily.” There was more laughter over such matters as black bread and pretzels. Julia Grant said she had never seen *black* bread. Joseph replied that black bread was a staple of German diet, but that there was something the Germans liked even more—pretzels, which made Germans thirsty for lager beer, which made them hungry for more pretzels. The table rocked with laughter. The President said that he had heard of a young banker in New York named Jacob Schiff, “a real comer.” Joseph said, “But he is not as smart as me.” At this, Mrs. Potter Palmer laughed so hard she choked on her cutlet and had to be pounded on the back by the President.

* Probably one of the Browns of Brown Brothers, later Brown Brothers, Harriman, Inc.

*Can this “unsalable” exchange have had anything to do with the “protested” exchange Mr. Hart was talking about? Probably not, because Hart did retract all his unkind remarks, and apologized.

*On a Congressman’s salary?

“THE D—D RAILROADS!”

In the years following the Civil War, the mergers, bankruptcies, organizations, and reorganizations of American railroads were creating an enormous field for stock and bond speculation. Railroads were being built competitively and haphazardly, which made them all the more interesting to speculators. By the late 1860's railroad stocks and bonds were not only the great “wonder” securities of the age; with the exception of government issues, they had become the chief interest of Wall Street and comprised 85 percent of all shares traded. There was great enthusiasm for railroad shares in Europe, and the ability to sell railroads in the Frankfurt, London, Paris, and Amsterdam markets was making many a banker wealthy.

By 1869 Joseph and his brothers had a working capital of over six million dollars, and their firm became the first of the German Jewish banking community to enter the railroad-securities field. They entered it, however, with reservations which, in retrospect, were more sound than not, and with Joseph's innate dread of land speculation, which, of course, was what railroad speculation was all about. A year before his banking firm was founded Joseph had turned down his brother James's suggestion that they invest in railroads, saying, “I consider this a speculation entirely out of our line.... Certainly none of us *know* enough of Erie, Central, etc. to keep them for an investment. We ought not to buy them at all.... We can make enough money in a legitimate way without gambling or hazard.”* And yet, as railroads began to dominate the financial scene, Joseph quickly fell victim to railroad fever, an ailment that replaced gold fever. Railroad fever, in fact, visited Joseph Seligman with an almost fatal attack.

Not quite two years after his antirailroad advice to James, Joseph, already deeply involved in the “Erie, Central, etc.,” wrote excitedly to Isaac in

London: “We have just now seen Mr. Drew and he requested you to sell his 5000 shares of Erie in London.... Mr. Drew is a large operator and if satisfied will give us frequent orders in future.”

Drew—the notorious “Uncle Daniel” Drew, an ex-cattle drover—was indeed a large operator, and was able to force the price of Erie stock up and down at will. Why did Drew want his shares sold in London and not New York? So New York wouldn’t find out about it for a while. Allied with Drew in his operations were two other terrors of the age—“Jubilee Jim” Fisk, a former circus roustabout, and an ex-farm hand who became the leader of the threesome named Jay Gould. Joseph Seligman felt somewhat out of his league with these powerful roughnecks (which, perhaps, was why they employed him), but he did his best to keep up with them. At Drew’s bidding, Joseph wrote to an important customer in Cincinnati, urging him to buy Erie because “it is now 59, but we have reason to believe that old Drew is at work and we should not be surprised to see it up to 65 or 66 before two weeks.” The stock did reach that figure, then toppled again. In the great Erie “war” of 1868—when Drew, Fisk, and Gould sold millions of dollars’ worth of Erie stock to Cornelius Vanderbilt, and then drove the stock down, leaving Vanderbilt two million dollars poorer—the Erie Railroad became known as “The Scarlet Woman of Wall Street.” When Gould went to jail for this particular manipulation, the Seligmans, who had been acting as his brokers, loyally guaranteed his \$20,000 bail bond and, with this action, more or less permanently committed themselves to Gould.

Just what brought the Seligmans and the Jay Gould group together to begin with is uncertain, but it was an alliance that has provided lasting controversy. Perhaps Gould—who himself admitted candidly that he was “the most hated man in America”—sought out the Seligman firm because he hoped their name would lend prestige, as a kind of ballast, to his own high-flying operations. (This, at least, is what the Seligmans have always said.) Or perhaps the Seligmans sought out Gould. Or, possibly, Gould simply had to settle for the young Seligman firm when older, more conservative gentile banking houses refused to act as his brokers. (One of these many years later told Frank A. Vanderlip, president of the National City Bank, “I made money because I stuck to one rule: I never dealt in Jay Gould bonds.”)

Socially, Gould was ostracized from every group in New York. Even at the height of his success, when he controlled the Erie and had made millions in the stock market, he was never invited to Mrs. Astor's balls and, when he tried to join, was blackballed—almost unanimously—by the New York Yacht Club. He was an unappetizing little creature—sallow, frail, shy, and ill. He spent twenty years dying of tuberculosis, often in terrible pain and bleeding from the lungs, and, unable to sleep at night, he paced the sidewalk in front of his Fifth Avenue house under the eye of a bodyguard. By joining forces with Gould, the Seligmans did nothing to enhance their position with gentile society, nor did Gould profit socially from his association with the Seligmans. If anything, the relationship fanned the billowing anti-Semitism of the postwar period, and is perhaps responsible for the fact that many people today believe that Gould himself was Jewish. At the height of his unpopularity, Henry Adams referred to him as “the complex Jew,” and many of his contemporaries in Wall Street regarded him, as Dixon Wecter has said, “as a Shylock in habits and probably heredity.” This notion was supported by the discovery that Gould was descended from one Nathan Gold, who had settled in Fairfield, Connecticut, in 1646, and that the “u” had been added to the family name as late as 1806. Still, as Wecter points out, “it is quite possible that Israel has been blamed unfairly” for Jay Gould. And the best reason for believing this is that Gould was a man who simply did not care what anybody thought of him. If he had been Jewish, he would not have troubled to deny it.

This was a period which has been labeled “one of the most sordid of United States political and economic history,” what with the carpetbaggers in the South and, in the North, a high tolerance for “bribery, political gangsterism, and wild speculation.”* Gould and Drew and Jim Fisk were, from that standpoint, very much in tune with their times. Gould admitted that he used bribery and blackmail to buy up Erie Railroad stock options from towns along his routes, and that he used Fisk's force of “plug-uglies” to take over by force and violence when other methods failed. Gould, furthermore, was by his own admission a raider and a ruiner. He had no interest in managing or improving railroads. He merely liked to drive a railroad's stock up, with rumors and with trading, and then sell it and let it collapse of its own inflated weight.

The Seligman firm, in Joseph's words, did "an enormous amount of business" in the Gould manipulations of the Erie stock, selling short for their own account whenever Gould or Fisk or Drew sold short—as they did consistently—letting the triumvirate's operations provide the pattern for the Seligmans' own. In almost no time, the Seligmans had let the name of their old friend President Grant be linked with one of the most spectacular and scandalous financial coups of the decade—Jay Gould's attempt to corner the gold market.

The scheme boggled the minds of some of the brightest financiers of the day, and perhaps, in fairness to Joseph and his brothers, they never quite grasped what Gould was up to. Certainly President Grant was slow to realize what was afoot, as Gould had expected he would be.

In essence, it was a two-part plan designed to fill Gould's pockets by selling inflated gold shares and by collecting higher freight rates on his Erie Railroad.* Gould planned to start buying up gold and then, as the price climbed, to go to Grant—with the aid of the Seligmans and their entree to the White House—and persuade him that there was a shortage of gold. "What shall we do?" Grant was intended to ask, whereupon part two of the scheme was to go into effect. In order to build up the American gold supply again, it would be suggested that Grant step up United States grain sales to Europe, which would be paid for in gold. (This would be good for the American farmer, Gould pointed out charitably, though farmers were a class of Americans in which he had never shown much interest previously. It would also be good for his Erie Railroad, which was the major grain shipper from the Midwest to Eastern ports.)

Gould's stratagem was to raise the price of gold from \$100 to about \$145 and then unload it, meanwhile having got new freight contracts—at a higher rate—for shipping grain on the Erie. Gold began to climb as the Gould-Drew-Fisk group began buying, while the Seligmans, acting as the trio's brokers, also bought for their own account. Grant seemed to be falling into line perfectly, and gold did indeed reach \$145. Then, apparently, avarice—one of Mr. Gould's most consistent emotions—took over, and Gould decided to let gold get a little higher—to \$150—before selling. At this point Grant belatedly realized what was going on, and ordered his Secretary of the Treasury to release enough of the government's own stock of gold

reserves to bring the price down again. On what became known as Black Friday, gold prices crashed.

But, it turned out, Gould had sold out at the top of the market anyway, and so had the Seligmans. It was almost, or so it seemed at the time, as though Gould and the Seligmans had been given some advance warning of the Treasury's forthcoming action. Had Grant tipped his old friends off? It was never proved, but this was widely assumed to be the case.

One thing was certain: though Jay Gould emerged from the scuffle not quite so rich as Fort Knox, he was some ten to twenty million dollars richer than he had been, and the Seligmans, though no figure for their profits exists, cannot have done badly even if they made no more than a straight commission. When Gould's role in the "gold conspiracy" was discovered, he was attacked by an angry mob and barely escaped being lynched. As an almost anticlimactic aftermath, it turned out that Gould had double-crossed his old partner, Jim Fisk, by not letting him know that it was time to sell.

In 1872 Gould was ousted from the presidency of the Erie, and there was a long overdue investigation of the road's management. Joseph Seligman was the first witness called. He pointed out that his firm had been merely brokers for, not manipulators of, the Erie. The line between a manipulator and a manipulator's agent is somewhat thin, but in those more tolerant days this explanation apparently satisfied the investigating committee. Gould himself went on to blow stardust in the committee members' eyes by telling a pathetic tale of how, as a poor farm boy, he "drove the cows to pasture and stung my bare feet on the thistles," and how, at the age of seventeen, he came to New York hoping to sell a mousetrap he had invented. "It was in a pretty mahogany case," he said, "which I carried under my arm. I went into a Sixth Avenue car, I think, and every now and then I ran out on the platform to see the buildings, leaving the case containing the mousetrap on the seat." He came back to find the mousetrap gone, and there, sure enough, was a sinister retreating figure hurrying down the aisle of the streetcar. Gould collared the man, who turned out to be a notorious criminal. For having helped apprehend the rogue, Gould said, he had surely done his duty to society. The mousetrap story also satisfied the investigating committee, and both Gould and the Seligmans emerged from the investigation unscathed. Or nearly so. The unholy light from the "Scarlet Woman of Wall Street" now bathed the Seligman brothers.

In the first months following the investigation, Joseph resolved to “stay out of the d——d railroads altogether.” But the temptation was too great. Soon he had stepped up his railroad activities again, and was into them even more heavily than before. In 1869 America got its first transcontinental railroad when California’s Governor Leland Stanford went to Promontory, Utah, to drive the famous “golden spike” into the link joining the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific. The portly Governor aimed a silver mallet at the golden spike, swung, and missed. The miss was symbolic of the chaotic state of railroads, but no one perceived the symbolism. From that point onward, the growth of railroads was so rapid and disorganized that today there is virtually no American hamlet so small that it does not have its miles of rusted track approaching it, and a dilapidated station at its heart.

One transcontinental railroad might have seemed enough, but the first merely spurred dozens of rivals. One of these was called the South Pacific Railroad Company of Missouri, a line to run between St. Louis and the Kansas border. (Early railroads were named in the same helter-skelter fashion as they grew; what the South Pacific had to do with Missouri is unclear, except that the aim of the road was westward.) Joseph Seligman undertook to sell the South Pacific’s first bond issue.

His system, a favored one of the period, was to loan a line money in return for bonds which were secured by the huge government land grants being given to railroads. It was a system which worked well when the bonds were marketable. In the case of the South Pacific the bonds sold poorly, and Joseph was briefly discouraged, suspecting that the country was becoming railroad-poor, “in view of the fact that nearly 200 railroads are being constructed within the borders of the United States.” Nevertheless, Joseph agreed to take on a second bond issue for the South Pacific with the proviso that someone from his firm be put on the railroad’s board. Thus Joseph himself became a director of the South Pacific.

Meanwhile, he was also helping to finance the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad, a much more ambitious project which planned to lay tracks all the way from Springfield, Missouri, to the California coast (going nowhere near the Atlantic, however). There were a few problems. To begin with, though the Atlantic & Pacific had been granted 42 million acres of land for its proposed 2,000 miles of track, only 283 miles of track had actually been laid. It was essential to the economics of railroads that the lines have, at

their terminal points, cities, or at least markets, to provide the completed lines with revenue from freight. A project such as the Atlantic & Pacific had to make its way through a great deal of industrially barren Western land, and across the industrially dead Rocky Mountains, before it got to the commercially profitable Pacific Coast. There were, furthermore, only a few level or practicable crossings over the mountains and, at the time, only two possible crossing points on the Colorado River. In the case of the Atlantic & Pacific, it turned out that other lines had already preempted these points. The Atlantic & Pacific was, when Joseph took an interest in it, in effect a railroad to nowhere.

Joseph was demonstrating a curious weakness that would continue to plague him in all his railroad dealings: he had a poor sense of geography. He never seemed to know quite where he was. (This was literally true; his wife used to complain that whenever he came out of a theater or restaurant, he invariably started walking the wrong way.) He seems only dimly to have grasped the facts of such topographical features as the Rockies and the Colorado. Also, an even more serious defect, he had very little interest in the management, operation, or even in the reason for railroads. He didn't care how a line was run, or why, or even where, as long as it had iron wheels. He was only interested in its financial side. And so, when he financed railroads, he was really financing a business he did not understand.

Still, he went into the Atlantic & Pacific for several millions of dollars and took on its bonds to sell, which did even more poorly than the South Pacific's. As he had done with the SP, he joined the board of directors of the Atlantic & Pacific. A glance at the map, meanwhile, would have revealed to Joseph that, in addition to the two lines' individual problems, for a considerable distance across the state of Missouri they ran parallel to each other and only a few miles apart. Joseph's two struggling lines were competitors.

Joseph had also become interested in the Union Pacific Railway Company, Southern Branch. This line, which presently changed its name to the jawbreaking "Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railway Company"—called the K & T, or the "Katy"—was to be built on a north-south line from Fort Riley, Kansas, to New Orleans. Once more, a glance at the map would have revealed that the tracks of the Katy, moving southward, would at some point intersect—and collide—with the tracks of the Atlantic & Pacific,

moving westward. And it was not so simple as building a bridge, or constructing a tunnel, at the meeting point, since both lines appeared to have identical title to the disputed land. In other words, whichever line got there first could effectively stop the other. On the board of the Katy, and laboring to sell her bonds, were such Wall Street figures as Levi P. Morton (of Morton, Bliss & Company), George C. Clark (of Clark, Dodge), August Belmont (of August Belmont)—and Joseph Seligman.

In 1870, while the South Pacific and the Atlantic & Pacific raced westward side by side, and the Katy raced southward to beat the Atlantic & Pacific, someone asked Seligman, “Which line are you for, Joe?” “I’m for railroads!” Joseph replied, no doubt with a trace of hysteria in his voice.

He also had other railroad commitments. He was involved with the Missouri Pacific Railroad, one of whose projects was to build a small branch line in St. Louis County from Kirkwood to Carondelet, Missouri. In the area, President Grant had a ramshackle and unproductive farm, and Joseph wrote the line’s president, Andrew Pierce, saying: “When the Mo. Pacific R.R. builds the Carondelet Branch, I would advise by all means to take the route through General Grant’s farm.” “Why?” Pierce wanted to know. “Because I told Grant that’s the way it would go,” Joseph replied. Since Joseph was financing it, that was the way it went. Railroad fever seems to have come close to affecting Joseph’s reason. While directing railroads through his friends’ farms, he was able to complain, in the next breath, that railroad routes were being laid out “against all dictates of logic and sense.”

Joseph’s other railroads were nearing the point of battle, and in 1871 actual warfare broke out. Construction crews of the Katy and the Atlantic & Pacific met at the town site of Vinita (now in the state of Oklahoma), and went at each other with clubs, picks, crowbars, and heavy wooden railroad ties. It was a bloody encounter, and quite a number of men on both sides were killed before the Katy was declared the victor and Joseph decided that some of his railroad directorships “seem to represent a conflict of interests.” To solve this, he resigned from the board of the Katy, remaining on the board of the other two conflicting lines. But he held on to his Katy stock anyway, just in case.

A year later Joseph found himself in a despondent mood about railroads and wrote to his brother William in Paris: “Now as to our various

investments in R.R. bonds which have at present no market value I fully agree with you that we have too many for comfort.” The letter continued on a note of high resolve: “I have concluded not to go another Dollar on any R.R. or State or City bond ... and nothing will induce me hereafter [to put] another Dollar in any new enterprise until I have the moral assurance that the bond is as good as sold in Europe.” And yet, halfway through this same letter, Joseph began to waver and to defend his activities in railroads, reminding William, “We have made a fortune these past 6 years & made it principally out of new R. Roads.”

But Joseph began privately advising his clients to stay out of railroads. “We wish to give you our experience,” he wrote to one of them. “New roads want no end of money ... when you are in once for \$25,000 they will draw you in for \$100,000 and, subsequently, for half a million ... it will take you many years to get your money back—and possibly never. This is our friendly caution.”

It was good advice, but Joseph, addicted to the iron horse, was incapable of following it. In the years to come, his investments escalated from three railroads to over a hundred. At times he himself seemed confused by his activities. At one point he helped Jay Gould buy a controlling interest in the Missouri Pacific. A year later Joseph bought back a lot of the bonds he had sold to Gould. When Joseph helped Commodore Vanderbilt dispose, quietly in London—in the same kind of over-the-transom deal Joseph had performed for Drew—of some New York Central bonds, J. P. Morgan, Vanderbilt’s banker, repaid Joseph by helping him sell 2 million dollars’ worth of Gould’s Missouri Pacific bonds—though Gould and Vanderbilt (and Morgan too) were bitter enemies. The Missouri Pacific bonds sold, as usual, poorly, and Joseph wrote William in a familiar vein: “I am heartily sick of waging a seemingly endless battle over Western railroads.” Soon, however, he was back in again, selling Gould and Collis P. Huntington of San Francisco a controlling interest in the San Francisco line, which was supposed to provide the “missing link” over the Sierras from the Gould-dominated (at the time) Union Pacific into San Francisco. The Seligman had no sooner sold the line to Gould than they bought it back again—and tried to sell it again, and finally did, to the Santa Fe on a share-for-share basis.

While Joseph was cautioning his clients to stay out of railroads, he was flirting with “a short but very promising little road” called the Memphis, Carthage & Northwestern. Soon after he had sunk \$250,000 in it the M C & W found itself unable to pay for an engine. In an emergency move to help out, Joseph personally purchased a locomotive—which he named “The Seligman”—and rented the engine back to the line for a modest seventy dollars a week. (It was an idea borrowed from Vanderbilt, whose engine was called “The Commodore.”) “The Seligman” chugged around for a while, but was unable to pull the line out of the red. Within three years it collapsed into bankruptcy and the engine was sold at auction for two dollars.

In 1873 Joseph wrote: “I am disgusted with all railroads, and shall *never again* be tempted to undertake the sale of a d—d railroad bond. I am daily engaged in two or three d—d railroad meetings and, therefore, cannot attend to office business as much as I want to.” A month later he was writing dreamily of something called the “Great National, Atlantic and Pacific Railroad ... a line never obstructed by snows, and of comparatively easy grades.” A year later he was writing to William: “It would have been better if we had never touched [railroad] bonds at all ... it was impossible for us to compete with the Barings and J. S. Morgan [father of J.P. and head of Morgan’s London office] and others in the very best roads of the United States ... we did not then understand the difference between finished first-class roads and unfinished second-class roads.”

There was more than the difference between finished and unfinished roads that Joseph Seligman did not understand. But the above letter pinpoints one area of the Seligmans’ railroad difficulties: J. P. Morgan and his bank and friends. In allying themselves with Gould, the Seligmans had made a powerful enemy of Morgan. To be sure, Morgan, in return for a favor (but never otherwise), would sometimes help them out. But the Seligmans’ opportunities to perform favors for Morgan were rather few. Aligned with Morgan was August Belmont, a man never particularly eager to see the Seligmans succeed. Morgan, Belmont, and the Rothschilds formed an axis of financial power that Joseph Seligman was finding it increasingly difficult to beat.

*Curiously, when Joseph spoke of land-buying deals, he often contrasted them with “legitimate” business.

*F. Redlich, *A History of Banking, Men and Ideas*.

*Gould’s scheme was not unlike the gold-inflating plot devised by the late Ian. Fleming in his James Bond novel, *Goldfinger*.

“MY BANK”

Since Joseph Seligman was the leading Jewish financier in New York, the majority of his clients were also Jewish. This meant, of course, that when Joseph Seligman got nipped in one of his less successful ventures, many other New York Jews were also nipped. At the Harmonie Club, the select German Jewish counterpart of men’s clubs of the era, members took to singing, “*An Seligman hab’ ich mein Geld verloren*” when Joseph entered the room after one of his railroad misadventures. Joseph grew to care less for the Harmonie, and began to spend more time at the Union League Club, whose membership he sometimes seemed to prefer.

Around 1873 a curious change began to take place in Joseph Seligman. He was fifty-four and an established millionaire, but his outlook and attitude began to shift. Possibly it was a result of Grant’s Treasury offer a few years earlier, or of lunches at the White House, where people like Mrs. Potter Palmer found him amusing. It was not that he began to long for a place in New York society, exactly, but he was becoming more Americanized, more gentitized, losing some of his feeling of Jewishness. None of the Seligmans kept kosher households at this point. Joseph continued to be a member in good standing of Temple Emanu-El, but more often than not “the press of business” kept him away from Sabbath services. He had also met a young man named Felix Adler, a German rabbi’s son who advanced ideas of a society based on ethics rather than religious piety, which Joseph found interesting.

This changed frame of mind began to have a strong effect on Joseph’s approach to business. For years, the names dominating the note-issuing commercial banks—Willing, Morris, Hamilton (whose spiritual descendants still control commercial banking today)—were gentile.

Commercial banking seemed the gentile banker's private niche, just as Jewish bankers such as Joseph had found a niche of their own as note-trading merchant bankers. There had been little crossing over from these two banking areas until Joseph, in the 1870's, decided that the Seligmans should re-establish their San Francisco business, and that this should be their first commercial bank. Joseph, aware that this would be a departure from what was considered "traditional" Jewish banking practice, chose a name with English overtones—the Anglo-California National Bank, Ltd.—and, to reinforce the bank's Englishness, turned over its organization to his brother Isaac in London.

It is certainly a testament to Isaac's financial ingenuity that he was able to plan nearly every detail of the bank in California (where Isaac had never been) by remote control six thousand miles away. In the process he became quite possessive about the project and began to refer to it as "my bank." (When Abraham Seligman, who considered himself a West Coast expert, traveled to London to discuss launching the new bank, Isaac was quite nettled at his brother's "interference," and wrote home to say that Abraham had come to London "probably because he has nothing better to do.")

In London, Isaac made a public offering of Anglo-California stock, and raised the impressive sum of £400,000—or about two million dollars in U.S. currency in those days. Isaac fussed endlessly over the tiniest matters and wrote to Joseph in a lecturing tone: "I need not call to your attention the great moral responsibility you now have. With God's help our reputation will be enhanced by the Success of your management of the Bank." He added sternly: "Should you mismanage affairs, you may rely upon it that our good name will suffer immensely, and nothing would be so deplorable as to suffer in reputation." Clearly, in the back of Isaac's mind through all this was his fear that Jews might be accused of overstepping themselves.

Isaac went on to instruct Joseph to send him "*weekly* summaries" of transactions and "intelligible reports," and urged him to be "exceedingly careful not to incur any bad debts, not to lock up your money in any unnegotiable security, and not ... to lend money to prominent politicians with the prospect of having to wait years before getting it back"—all of which sounded like Joseph's advice to his brothers several years before.

In the spring of 1873, the bank was getting ready to open its doors and Isaac wrote a series of insistent letters to say, "You will find some A-1 man

to become head manager.” Joseph replied that he had found two A-1 men—his oldest son, David, just twenty-two, and his brother-in-law (who was also his first cousin), Ignatz Steinhardt. Isaac was unhappy with these appointments. David, Isaac said, was “too green” to run a bank, “though at least he is American-born.” Ignatz, said Isaac, spoke English poorly and “must be kept in a back room.” He added that he hoped the boys would hire “a good corresponding clerk who can write a faultless business letter, for I should be ashamed to let the Directors read such rigamarole as dear David writes, and such ungrammatical English as Ignatz sends at present.”

Just before the opening, Joseph made a surprise trip to San Francisco to check on things—a move Isaac had “scarcely anticipated,” and which he considered scarcely necessary. But Joseph’s inspection tour convinced Joseph that Isaac was right: David was not experienced enough to handle the assignment, and the whole family was astonished to see Joseph withdraw his own son and replace him with a man nobody had ever heard of, Richard G. Sneath, the first gentile and first nonfamily member to be given a place of importance in a Seligman enterprise.

Isaac was startled, but he understood. “There is not the slightest objection to the appointment,” he wrote, “only the Board had better wait until form letters of resignation from David arrive, and some statement is received from you as to the gentleman intended to replace him.... You must bear in mind that things here are done systematically, and not reckless and slipshop [sic].”

During the early months of the bank, the New York stock market was unsteady. By September, prices began to drop and a number of firms failed. Joseph wrote to Isaac telling of “numerous failures, and the end is not yet. Jay Cooke & Co. suspended yesterday noon.... Let us thank God that we have made no losses.” Banks were in desperate need of cash, and Joseph tried to persuade President Grant to deposit government funds in private banks, even though, as Joseph admitted, such a move would be “clearly illegal.” By September 23 Joseph was writing Isaac: “Things look decidedly blue this evening, most of the banks decline to pay out Greenbacks or currency today, and the Chicago banks are reported suspended.” The Great Panic of 1873 was under way.

Joseph now received word from Ignatz Steinhardt in San Francisco that he and Mr. Sneath were squabbling. The point of the dispute was which

man was to receive top billing; Ignatz did not see why Sneath's name had been placed above his own on the bank's letterhead. A weary Joseph wrote to Ignatz: "Your letter, coming as it does in the midst of an unprecedented panic gives me such a pain ... you must try to get along."

Ignatz wanted his name not only in the top spot on the stationery but also, of all things, in larger letters. Sneath's arguments for having top position were in themselves unsettling. It would "look better," Sneath insisted, in the San Francisco banking community if a "Christian name" headed the bank's list of managers. Joseph had foreseen such an argument, and had hoped to avoid it. To Isaac Joseph wrote: "Our friend Sneath imagines there is prejudice in the American mind against foreigners and Israelites (which we are sure there *ought* not to be and *is not* among intelligent Americans)." He added: "Last summer we discovered that he [Sneath] had an exalted opinion of himself. Steinhardt has also the same trait of character."

Joseph couldn't decide which man was right, or—perhaps—which to blame more. He could not bring himself to dismiss his wife's brother. In Sneath's case, there was a year's contract with the bank which had to be honored. Joseph wrote strongly worded letters to both men, whereupon Sneath, pronouncing himself outnumbered by Seligmans and their in-laws, huffily resigned. Joseph, aghast, wrote to Sneath saying:

Your letter ... has shocked and grieved me greatly ... after your promise to give the bank a trial for twelve months, you suddenly ask the acceptance of your resignation, ostensibly for the reason that you disapprove of a co-manager.... You are now pleased to say that the Bank would have more friends among the Americans but for their foolish *prejudices* against the *religion of the bank*.... Don't you think, Mr. Sneath, that you err in this respect and do injustice to the mercantile community of San Francisco?

It was no use. Sneath refused to withdraw his resignation.

In Paris, William Seligman now chose this worst of all possible moments to announce that he wished to quit his brothers' firm too, and for suspiciously vague reasons. Angrily, Joseph turned William's problems over to Isaac, saying:

Now I shall not have time to write Bro. Wm. It is criminal of him to bother us now when all our intellect and energy are required in a crisis of unprecedented dimensions. I shall invite that selfish Bro. Wm. to carry out his threat. Please inform him that he is mistaken when he expects that we will buy him out. We shall do no such thing. We shall want him to come here in Jan'y and take his 1/8th share of assets consisting of railroad bonds and shares, mining shares, property, bad and good debts, and attend personally to collecting them and, my word for it, he will find himself in better health than by eating heavy dinners, drinking heavy wines, writing heavy letters to us, and doing nothing else.

From Paris, William airily explained that one reason why he wanted his brothers to buy him out was that he wished to buy his wife a diamond necklace. William seemed unaware of the panic, and had the impudence to say that he was “disappointed” with the size of his “one-eighth share of assets” at the close of 1873, the panic year. (In those days, all Seligman businesses were run as one and the profits divided among the brothers equally.) Joseph wrote to Isaac:

Now Brother William has no practical sense and if he would only act as he preaches, things would go better. I am informed that while greatly discouraged at our statements he persists in giving grand balls and dinner parties which are in bad taste and do him (nor us) no good. We don't do it, and while the expenses of our three families with so many grown children are necessarily quite large (my own not larger than those of James and Jesse) we are trying to reduce them and certainly don't throw away money in parties, balls, and dinners, which lead to no benefit.

In the end it usually fell to Joseph to untangle family matters when they became too intricately knotted, when the “our dear Babette” syndrome made its familiar presence felt. Joseph sent Abraham, his best-natured brother, to San Francisco, and also hired Frederick F. Low, a former Governor of California, to comanage the bank with Abraham and Ignatz. Joseph had always wanted a gentile name on the bank's roster, and, interestingly enough, Low's name was now given top spot on the letterhead.

Abraham didn't mind. Why didn't Ignatz? A sum—£3,000—was credited to Ignatz's personal account to get him to accept second billing. Joseph directed that this should be subtracted from his own share of the profits (but his brothers insisted that the £3,000 be deducted from all of them equally). Regine Seligman got her diamond necklace. Though a family rule forbade private speculation, an exception was made in William's case. He was allowed to speculate in a certain stock; it went up, and there was enough from the profit for the jewels—and for more parties. Richard G. Sneath vanished from financial history. The Panic of 1873 subsided, and the economy started up again.

But the trouble the Seligmans had opening their first commercial bank was prophetic. In the long run, the Anglo-California Bank was not so much a financial loss as a time-consuming nuisance. In a few years they relinquished control of the bank, though they held on to some of its stock. It exists today as the Crocker-Anglo Bank.

Joseph Seligman went on becoming more Americanized, more gentiled. His letters home to his wife during his 1873 inspection tour to San Francisco revealed a wholly new—for him—appreciation of the value of land. Along with the beauties of California scenery, he pondered the joys of real estate:

My Beloved Babet:

Last evening we went out to the country to see our friend Sneath, about 25 miles from here. How I wish you might have been with us! He owns 110 acres, for which, four years ago, when the land was still a desert, he paid 11,000 dollars. Just picture to yourself groves of the finest oaks and other trees, some of which branch out 100 feet. Then imagine as many kinds of roses, pinks, violets and numberless other flowers ... all sorts of German berries and plums, oranges, figs, pears, various kinds of nuts and olives, in short everything the heart could desire!... A veritable paradise!!! Moreover, there are the horses and cows, four of which latter were valued at 800 dollars apiece and yielded 16 quarts daily.

If God grants us health you must surely spend a winter here....

Farewell, Beloved,
Your Joseph

He had actually studied the figures of that least Jewish of businesses, farming. A few days later, he grew more enthusiastic, with more statistics:

My Beloved Babet:

Day before yesterday Abe and I went by train to San José and Santa Clara. Impossible to describe to you what a paradise is that tract of land sixty miles long and six miles wide where the farmer can glean two harvests of wheat, oats, corn in one summer and twelve crops of grass and hay, and all that without a drop of rain between April and October. Who does not see it cannot imagine it. I saw there a century plant which ten weeks ago was two feet high and now measures thirty-three and a half feet and is still growing taller.* There are farmers who sell in one year \$100,000.00 worth of grain, and a gentleman whom we met told us that he makes 30,000 gallons of wine each year....

Of course when Joseph got home he was met by the panic, and Babet never got her winter in California.

One of the gloomiest days of the panic coincided with Joseph's and Babet's twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. They had always lived in rented houses, and were at that time living at 26 West Thirty-fourth Street, where their landlord was John Jacob Astor. Almost opposite, and next door to the Astors, a forty-five-foot wide mansion was for sale. Joseph (whose personal finances were unaffected by the panic) bought it for \$60,000 and presented it to Babet as an anniversary gift. But, unlike her husband's, little Babet's heart still lay in the Old World. She was too much in the habit of hiding from the tax collector to live in a mansion. She was dismayed by the gift, and refused to move, so that Joseph sadly sold the house a few months later, at postpanic prices, for \$62,000. (A number of years later, the building brought \$750,000; Ohrbach's now stands on the site.)

It is hard to see how Joseph found time for philanthropy during these busy years, but he did. In his growing thirst to be considered an American more than a Jew, he had backed one particularly touching cause. The irascible and sharp-tongued Mary Todd Lincoln had not endeared herself to Washington during her years in the White House and, after the President's assassination, officialdom in the capital preferred to ignore her. Lincoln had left an estate of over \$80,000, which should have been enough to keep his widow in comfort, if not in style, and yet, in 1868, she considered herself in

such financial straits that she advertised in the New York *World* for aid. She followed this with an unsuccessful attempt to sell her personal effects, including her clothes, at auction, which further shocked and disgusted the public. One of the few people to come to Mrs. Lincoln's assistance was Joseph Seligman.

When she and her young son Tad moved to Europe, Joseph paid for the cost of the voyage. When she settled in Frankfurt, Joseph directed his brother Henry to look after her, and for several years Joseph and his brothers sent money to her. In 1869 a pension bill to care for the widows of Presidents was introduced in, and rejected by, Congress, whereupon Joseph Seligman wrote to Grant:

The enclosed letter of Mrs. Lincoln was transmitted to me by my brother residing in Frankfurt, with the request to intercede with Your Excellency in her behalf. My brother states that Mrs. Lincoln's means are apparently exhausted and that she lives quite secluded. If your Excellency can consistently recommend to Congress to alleviate the pressing wants of the widow of the great and good Lincoln, I have no doubt that the bill now pending would pass to the satisfaction of the party and all good citizens.

From Frankfurt, in English grown rusty from his years in Germany, Henry Seligman wrote an even more moving letter to Senator Carl Schurz:

My object in taking the liberty of writing you today is to plead on behalf of the widow of our late good and lamented President Lincoln. She is here living in a most retired and economical way, and has to the best of my information not enough to live comfortable.... I know it is not a popular matter to vote away money or grant pensions except to Parties deserving them and I can assure there is no more worthier object that our Government can bestow than by giving to the wife of that great and good man who died in the service of his country sufficient means to live at least respectable. Why, had you dear Sir seen her as I have done last New Year living in a small street in the third floor in dirty rooms with hardly any furniture, all alone grieved and nearly heart broken, you would have said with me Can it be possible that the wife of our great man lives in such a way, and is our

Nation not indebted to him, who gave up his life for the sake of freedom, that our great and rich Country cannot show at least its gratitude to his sacred Name by some small testimonial in giving to his family a comfortable Home. She ... lives very retired and plain, sees hardly any one, and the shock of that terrible night's affair, which robbed us of one of the greatest and best of men has terribly affected her health and mind.... I have written also to the Oregon Senators ... also Senator Corbil from California.... My brother Joseph can inform you that we all urge the matter only on account of our devotion to the Name of Lincoln whom we all loved and respected so much, and we should not like to see his family in want for anything—With my kindest regards to your honored self wishing you continued health and prosperity, I remain yours most respectfully

Henry Seligman

The letters had their effect; a pension bill was passed in 1870. Characteristically, Mrs. Lincoln, who later became insane, never thanked the Seligmans. But from their letters it is clear that they never expected her to be grateful; they were expressing nothing more than their “devotion to the Name of Lincoln.”

America, “the land of infinite promise,” had become a sacred object in Joseph Seligman's mind. It was one of the few things about which he would permit himself to be sentimental. In 1874 his third eldest daughter, Sophie, had consented to marry Moritz Walter, the son of another prominent German Jewish family (I. D. Walter & Company were woolen merchants). While plans for Sophie's engagement party were under way, a young justice of the Alabama Supreme Court arrived in New York from Montgomery to try to obtain a loan from New York bankers for his state. He contacted the pro-South Lehmans, who, in addition to their cotton brokerage business, had taken on the job of fiscal agents to Alabama shortly after the close of the Civil War. But the Lehmans were unable to help, and the judge was about to return home empty-handed when a friend suggested the Seligmans. With their reputation as ardent supporters of the Union cause, they seemed an unlikely source, but the judge was willing to try.

Joseph Seligman received him, listened to his plea, then said with his customary formality, “Will you do me and my family the honor of dining

with us this evening? We are announcing the engagement of our daughter. Perhaps at the party we'll be able to give you a more definite answer about the loan."

It was a large party, with dozens of Seligmans, Walters, relatives, and friends. There were cheers, toasts, and speeches. Then Joseph, the leader of the family, stood up to speak—of Sophie's heritage, wandering back to the Baiersdorf he had known as a boy, his first trip to America with one hundred dollars sewed in the seat of his pants, his Mauch Chunk days, his peddling adventures in the South. While the bemused judge listened, Joseph began a long story about a young Jewish peddler in Selma who, as a result of an unjust accusation and religious bias, was about to be sentenced to prison until the young son of an Alabama judge stood up in his defense. "That friendless peddler," said Joseph, "was myself, and the judge's son is the Alabama Supreme Court justice who honors our table tonight." Turning to the Southerner, he said, "Sir, if you will call at my office in the morning, my brothers and I will be happy to advance your state one million dollars—at 6 percent interest."

"It was exactly the sort of grand gesture," commented one of his sons, "that my father liked to make."

But it was more than that. Family, friends, marriage, business—Joseph saw these as ingredients in a mixture of thickening consistency. Engagements, marriages, and the births of children all served to enrich the concoction; on these occasions money transactions nearly always took place, only to bind the elements closer together—the more the money, the tighter the bond.

The Southerner had felt a little odd and out of place at the party "among the Jewish *haute bourgeoisie*," as he wrote later. To Joseph, it was part of his new picture of himself. He had already served on boards (of the "Katy," for instance) with men like George C. Clark and August Belmont. His firm had begun to cosponsor multimillion-dollar issues with J. P. Morgan, who was becoming a major financial figure. With Felix Adler he had discussed founding the Ethical Culture Society, which Joseph did not think of as a "conversion" from, but perhaps an American substitute for, Old World Judaism. Having lunch at the White House or a gentile to dinner; commercial banking; Mrs. Potter Palmer's laughter; California's wheatfields, sixteen-quart-a-day cows, and fast-growing century plants; his

wish to own his own house; caring for Mrs. Lincoln; even his hectic activities with “the d—d railroads” that were growing across the American landscape even faster than the fastest-growing century plant—in Joseph’s mind they all added up to a perfectly assimilated Jew in America.

*Some local booster must have been trying to impress Joseph with this tall tale. Century plants cannot grow at the rate of half a foot a day, even in San José.

THE ASSIMILATIONISTS

At the time of the Panic of 1873, *Harper's Weekly* published a three-panel cartoon depicting the three kinds of men who were, supposedly, involved in the debacle. In the first panel, above the caption "Lost," sat the disconsolate small-businessman, head in hand, brooding over his empty desk. In the second was "The Paying Teller," perspiring, in shirt sleeves, frantically paying out handfuls of greenbacks in the public run on commercial banks. In the third, above the word "Gained," was the private banker, sitting, with his hands on his knees, on his fat bags of gold. Though the name on the latter's window was the fictitious "Catch 'Im & Pluck 'Im, Bankers," the cartoonist's intent was immediately apparent, for the banker's gloating, bearded face was heavily Semitic.

If any of the German Jewish bankers noticed this slur at the time, as they must have, none of them commented on it.

Formal anti-Semitism is based on certain specific assumptions: that Jews are recognizable from all other people as a "nation," and should not be treated as fellow citizens; and that Jews are, from birth, unpatriotic to their adopted country. It argues an "international plot" of Jews to take over the world by such quaint measures as "the use of liquor to befuddle the brains of Christian leaders." (In 1903 these accusations were supported by the publication of a thoroughly spurious "document," *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*.) But anti-Semitism is not always formal, nor does it always display such definite symptoms. Often it is a vaguely defined "aversion," based on distrust or—when aimed at wealthy Jews—jealousy. Even New England, where Jews were widely admired, produced some anti-Semites for some thoroughly peculiar reasons. John Jay Chapman, for instance, was for many years what one might call a rabid *pro*-Semite. He

claimed that the Jews represented a concentration of every human virtue, and insisted that they were smarter, braver, stronger, kinder, more pious and more moral than any other people. He considered them one of the world's great wonders, and compared them to the Parthenon and the Pyramids. Then Mr. Chapman took a trip to Atlantic City, where he witnessed Jewish families sunning themselves on the beach. He was so embittered at the discovery that Jews were no different from anybody else that he turned against them, and denounced them as stupid, uncritical, and "inferior."

In the years following the Civil War, as men like Joseph Seligman grew prosperous and performed feats that were reported in the newspapers, there was bound to be, among men less successful, a certain envy. And among the more powerful there were fear and a growing determination to keep men like Joseph Seligman "in their place." Joseph was now cooperating with John Pierpont Morgan, that curious and crotchety son of an expatriate New Englander who had turned to private banking, and who had returned to New York at a propitious moment, just before the outbreak of the war. If the Seligmans had been hurt by their association with Jay Gould and the "gold conspiracy" of a few years earlier, they were not helped by their new relationship with Morgan. Morgan was more feared than adored in Wall Street, and his own record for honest dealings was not entirely clean. Moreover, though Morgan was not an anti-Semite, he was a thorough snob. He treated the German-accented Joseph Seligman sniffily and condescendingly, and always insisted that Joseph come to *his* office to discuss business; he would not go to Joseph's. Joseph, meanwhile, disliked Morgan and was moved to comment, "Morgan—J. P. of Drexel, Morgan—is a rough, uncouth fellow, continually quarreling with Drexel in the office."

The term "social climber" had come into existence as New York society congratulated itself with the notion that "everybody and his cousin" who were outside its confines wanted desperately to get in. There were "nice people," and there were "common people," and as a rule of thumb all people with accents were common. German Jews who aspired to social acceptance, or even equality, encountered a heightening wall of exclusion. Furthermore, it was not a wall being built entirely by gentiles.

The Sephardic merchant families, "remarkable for their haughtiness, high sense of honor and their stately manners," according to a contemporary chronicler, occupied a quiet but secure place in society, Ward McAllister

notwithstanding. A number of men of old New York gentile society, including a Hamilton and a DeLancey, had married Sephardic Jewesses. There were Sephardim in all the best clubs. The Union Club, New York's most exclusive, contained several Hendrickses, Lazaruses, and Nathans, along with Mr. McAllister. (In 1863 a group of dissident members resigned when the Union Club refused to expel Judah P. Benjamin, not for being a Jew but for being a Southerner and one of the financial wizards of the Confederacy; this group then organized the Union League Club and, in a flourish of Northern patriotism, immediately took in the North's financial wizard, Joseph Seligman.) Moses Lazarus, father of Emma, had been a founding member of the Knickerbocker Club, New York's second-most exclusive. The Sephardim made the most of their entrenched position, and, if German Jews found the gentiles in New York society indifferent, they found the Sephardic Jews almost unapproachable.

The German Jews, by the 1870's, were called "Forty-Eighters," after the pivotal year of their migration from Germany. A careful distinction was drawn between Jews of the "Nathan type," and those of the "Seligman type," between "the better class of Jews" and "vulgar Jews," between "Sephardic" and "German," and, finally, between "refined Hebrew ladies and gentlemen" and "Jews." The more the Germans insisted that they were "Hebrews," not "Jews," the more the Sephardim tried to disassociate themselves from the accented newcomers by stressing their ancient Spanish heritage.* In 1872 a New York society journal featured the news of a "fashionable Hebrew wedding," pointing out that the bride and groom were both members of "old American Sephardic families." It began to be clear that, no matter how much they might wish to be, immigrant Germans were not really quite "American." In exactly the same fashion, and for the same reasons, native New York Catholic families looked down on the newer-arrived Catholics from Germany and the "shanty Irish," who had come to escape the potato famine.

In the gaslit New York of 1876, the hand torch of the Statue of Liberty, the gift from France, sprouted surrealistically from a street corner at Fifth Avenue and Twenty-sixth Street—part of a campaign to raise money to get the rest of the statue assembled on an island in the harbor, where it would welcome immigrants to the New World. (France had contributed \$450,000 toward the erection of the statue, but expected the United States to

contribute an additional \$350,000 for the construction of a pedestal. For several years, while Americans bickered over who should pay this bill, the rest of Bertholdi's 225-ton lady reposed in a warehouse.) Emma Lazarus had written her lines, "Give me your tired, your poor ..." to be inscribed upon the base of the controversial gift. Miss Lazarus' lines had a majestic ring. But—or so it seemed at the time—they also conveyed a somewhat condescending tone. Seligmans, Lehmans, and Goldmans may have arrived tired and poor, but did not enjoy being called "the wretched refuse" of some teeming European shore. Many German Jews in the 1870's, perhaps overquick to sense a slight where none was intended, interpreted Miss Lazarus' words as a snide comment on their own humble immigrant beginnings. Subscribing funds for the statue's erection on Bedloe's Island became largely a Sephardic project, eschewed by Germans. Such forces served to draw the Germans even closer to one another, into their own "Hebrew Select," with their own exclusive standards.

There was another force building against them. After the Panic of 1873 bankers as a class found themselves under a cloud. To be a "merchant banker" or a "financier" was becoming a less than praiseworthy occupation. "Wall Street," from the street of enterprise, was becoming a national symbol of avarice and evil—"the wickedest street in the world." Men like Joseph Seligman were in a line of work that was becoming less and less "respectable."

There was of course one German Jewish banker in the Union Club. His name was August Belmont. (There were more if one counted his sons, Perry, Oliver H. P., and August, Jr.) By the 1870's, however, another of his strange character changes had taken place. Though he still headed August Belmont & Company, bankers, he had begun to prefer to be known as a "diplomat." (In 1853 he had been made United States chargé d'affaires at The Hague, and from 1855 to 1858 he was the resident American minister there.) He had taken up the sport of kings, and the Belmont colors—and regal colors they were: scarlet and maroon—were established. The Belmont coachmen's livery consisted of maroon coats with scarlet piping and silver buttons embossed with "the Belmont crest" (which many said he himself had designed after studying those of European royal families), and black satin knee breeches with silver buckles. All his carriages were painted maroon with a scarlet stripe on the wheels. A lady correspondent of the day

described the appearance of August Belmont in his coach-and-four as “overpoweringly commanding. One thought of ... a King.” Belmont’s “image” was complete, but his ways remained difficult, contradictory.

Edith Wharton, in *The Age of Innocence*, presented a thinly disguised portrait of August Belmont in the fictional character of Julius Beaufort—a man whom, one of Mrs. Wharton’s characters comments, “certain nuances” escaped. Said Mrs. Wharton:

The question was, who *was* Beaufort? He passed for an Englishman, was agreeable, handsome, ill-tempered, hospitable and witty. He had come to America with letters of recommendation from old Mrs. Manson Mingott’s English son-in-law, the banker, and had speedily made himself an important position in the world of affairs; but his habits were dissipated, his tongue was bitter, his antecedents were mysterious.

Beaufort’s wife, who “grew younger and blonder and more beautiful each year,” always appeared at the opera on the night of her annual ball “to show her superiority to all household cares.” So did Mrs. August Belmont. On the social battleground of Newport, Caroline Belmont had also made several blood enemies, and there was a list of people in the Rhode Island colony to whom the Belmonts never spoke. Of Beaufort/Belmont, one of Mrs. Wharton’s characters airily explains, “We all have our pet common people.” But, Mrs. Wharton adds, “The Beauforts were not exactly common; some people said they were even worse.”

By the mid-1870’s the “mystery” of August Belmont’s past—his Jewish heritage—was probably the worst-kept secret in New York. But since it was considered an improper dinner-table topic, everyone in society pretended that there was, indeed, a mystery. They cleared their throats meaningfully when Belmont’s past was mentioned, and let it go at that.

The thing about August Belmont that impressed the other German Jewish bankers was, of course, that astonishing religion change, that dazzling mixed marriage, that leap out of the ghetto into the perfumed upper air of New York society. The others were eager to be accepted by their new city too, but were unprepared for any move as drastic as his. Privately, they were shocked by the spectacle of Belmont; it seemed to them dishonest. It was one thing to wish to assimilate, but quite another to deny a whole

tradition; one thing to embrace a new culture, but another to betray an old. Yet they regarded Belmont with mixed feelings—part admiration for his daring, part distrust of his motives.

Belmont's manner toward his former coreligionists was, in the meantime, disarming. "Belmont was a bit *too* jovial today," Joseph Seligman wrote in 1873. When the two met at their railroad board meetings, August Belmont always greeted Joseph with a "Hullo, Seligman!" in his gritty voice. Joseph, out of deference, always called Belmont "Mr. Belmont," but one day in 1874, feeling bold, Joseph cried out, "Hullo, Belmont!" Belmont's face froze. He chose an interesting way to punish Joseph for his overfamiliarity. For the next few months, he elaborately misspelled Joseph's name on correspondence as "Selligman," "Seligmann," or "Suligman."

Then there was the matter of J. P. Morgan. While Morgan was willing to participate with the Seligmans on certain bond issues, he sometimes seemed a bit more willing to do business with Belmont. Actually, Morgan, who understood the Belmont-Seligman rivalry perfectly, was beginning to use both men to suit his own needs, playing one against the other whenever the opportunity arose. But Joseph was convinced that Morgan's freeze-and-thaw attitude toward him was simply because he was Jewish and Belmont wasn't.

August Belmont defined a dilemma for New York's other German Jewish banking families: how much Jewishness to abandon, how much gentile Americanization to absorb.

Over the years the Sephardim in America had gradually modified their religious services to conform more closely to the prevailing Protestant ways. Early in the 1800's Temple Shearith Israel had introduced English into the service. The cantors, or *chazonim*, began to assume the dignity, and the dress, of Protestant clergymen and were called "Reverend." The public auctioning of honors, which began to seem undignified, was discontinued. Other modifications evolved slowly. But the German Jews, though there had been steps toward Reform in a few big-city congregations in Germany and in England, felt they must Americanize their New York synagogue in a bold and abrupt sweep.

Partly, they wanted to catch up with the Sephardim in the assimilation-social-acceptance process. They were also concerned for their children. As early as 1854 the *Israelite* had gloomily predicted: "We will have no Jews

left in this country in less than half a century” if synagogues did not rapidly adjust to the new age in America.

Temple Emanu-El became the symbol of the Germans’ efforts “to become one with progress.” When its new Fifth Avenue edifice was opened in 1870, with men like Joseph and Jesse Seligman on the building committee, it was hailed by the *New York Times* as one of the leading congregations in the world, “the first to stand forward before the world and proclaim the dominion of reason over blind and bigoted faith.” Reason was the key, and the new temple seemed somehow a beacon for a new era when all men, regardless of race or creed, would join in a “universal communion” of reason. The Judaism that the temple proclaimed was “the Judaism of the heart, the Judaism which proclaims the spirit of religion as being of more importance than the letter.” In 1873 Temple Emanu-El called Gustav Gottheil to its pulpit from Manchester, England, to preach this enlightened Judaism “in impeccable English accents, comprehensible to all New Yorkers.”

The attempt to bridge opposing worlds is apparent in the physical structure of Temple Emanu-El itself. Inside, with its pews and pulpit and handsome chandeliers—where hatted women worship alongside the men (unhatted), and not in a separate curtained gallery—it looks very like a church. But outside, as a kind of gentle gesture to the past, its Moorish façade calls to mind a synagogue.

Yet noble sentiments are often easier to express in rhetoric and architecture than they are in life. In some ways the temple seemed to emphasize the fact that Jews continued to live in two communities, the Jewish and the gentile, and the temple’s congregation, by attempting to be a little of each, began to seem a little less than either. This duality of feeling only seemed to isolate the Reform Jew further. Emotionally and theologically, the results of this adjustment were complicated. When Reform Rabbi Sarnet had been examined by an army board of chaplains during the Civil War, the notation placed after his name at the conclusion of the interview was “Lutheran.”

While the congregation of Temple Emanu-El seemed uncertain as to just how “Jewish” and how “American” it wished to be, it seemed quite certain that it wanted to retain a third culture: the German. New York’s German Jews began, in the 1870’s, to say to each other, “We are really more German

than Jewish,” and were convinced that nineteenth-century Germany embodied the finest flowering of the arts, sciences, and technology. German continued to be the language the families spoke in their homes. The music children practiced in family music rooms was German music. When a Seligman, Loeb, or Lehman traveled to Europe, he sailed on the Hamburg-America Line; it was the best. When he needed a rest, he took the waters at a German spa—Baden, Carlsbad, or Marienbad. At their dinners they served German wines. When illness struck, the ailing were hurried to Germany, where the best doctors were.

The elite German Jewish club was the Harmonie, founded in 1852 and one of the oldest social clubs in New York. For forty-one years it was the *Harmonie Gesellschaft*, German was its official language, and the Kaiser’s portrait hung in the hall. In some ways, however, the Harmonie was as progressive as Temple Emanu-El, where its membership worshiped. It was the first New York men’s club to admit ladies at the dinner hour, and it was famous for its food. (Particularly celebrated was the club’s herring with sour cream, which it put up in jars and the ladies carried home.)

Prosperous German Jewish men continued to return to Germany on their *Brautschaus*. One summer in Germany, Joseph Seligman encountered his friend Wolf Goodhart of New York, who had come over on just such a mission as Joseph had carried out two dozen years earlier. Joseph had recommended a particular young lady to Goodhart, but said Joseph in a letter home:

He says he has a mind of his own and will not marry unless he gets a lady of the first water—handsome, highly educated, sprightly. In fact he wants something quite *recherché*, a *ne plus ultra*. I think he may, on his way back, drop in at St. James’s Palace and look around there! His brother, Sander, in Lichtenfels who is more of a matter-of-fact man, tells him he is a d—d fool if he does not try to get one with money. (Sander has one in view with *Sechs Tausend Gulden*.)

In their New York houses Loeb’s, Goldman’s, and Lehman’s employed French chefs, Irish maids, English butlers, but German governesses. When children reached college age, they were dispatched to universities at Berlin, Heidelberg, and Leipzig.

As for elementary schools, the German Jews had, from 1871 on, one of their very own on West Fifty-ninth Street—the Sachs Collegiate Institute, run by Dr. Julius Sachs. Herr Doktor Sachs was a stern, Old World schoolmaster whose uniformed boys, in smart black suits and starched stand-up collars, were seldom spared the rod. He emphasized the classics, languages (including German), and Teutonic discipline. He himself spoke nine languages fluently, including Sanskrit. At the height of his career, Dr. Sachs was turning out Lehmans, Cullmans, Zinssers, Meyers, Goldmans, and Loebes who were ready for Harvard at the age of fifteen. Julius Sachs also established a coordinated school for girls in New York, though it was less successful. It was considered less important to instill the German heritage in girls, and daughters were sent to Brearley or to finishing schools abroad. After a day at Dr. Sachs's schools, children came home for further instruction under German tutors.

Something of an exception in their approach to education—as indeed they often were to other things—were the Seligmans, led by Joseph, whose longing for Americanization was overpowering. Several of his brothers had early Americanized their first names. Henry was originally Hermann, William was Wolf, James was Jacob, Jesse was Isaias, and Leopold was Lippmann. As parents, they began naming their children after the great heroes of their adopted land. Joseph's sons included George Washington Seligman, Edwin Robert Anderson Seligman (after Robert Anderson, the defender of Fort Sumter), Isaac Newton Seligman, and Alfred Lincoln Seligman—a quaint compromise. Joseph planned to call the boy Abraham Lincoln Seligman, but decided the name Abraham was too Judaic to perpetuate in America. At the same time, Joseph and his brothers named their oldest sons David, after their grandfather, following the Jewish tradition, and the oldest daughters Frances, after Fanny. William Seligman's David was David Washington. James modified David to DeWitt, thereby naming his first son after the first David Seligman as well as DeWitt Clinton. James also had a Washington and a Jefferson.

To educate his five boys, Joseph hit upon a dazzlingly American idea. He hired the creator of the great American boy hero, Horatio Alger, to live in his house and tutor his sons. James's five boys were invited to sit in on the Alger classes, where it was hoped they would all acquire the red-blooded

standards of “Tattered Tom,” “Ragged Dick,” and Alger’s other newsboy-to-riches heroes.

The experiment was not entirely a success. Alger may have been able to invent boy heroes, but he was far from one himself. He was a timid, sweet-tempered little man who, in his nonteaching hours, practiced his ballet steps. He was easily cowed, and his customary cry of alarm was “Oh, Lordy-me!” Ten lively Seligman boys were clearly too much for him, and he was forever having to rush to Babet or James’s wife, Rosa, for assistance. Once, when he cried out for help, the boys jumped on him, tied him up, and locked him in a trunk in the attic. They refused to let him out until he promised not to tell their mothers.

The schoolroom was on the top floor of the Seligmans’ brownstone, and, as Alger ascended the stairs the boys stood on an upper landing with lighted candles, aiming drops of hot wax at the top of his small bald head. But Alger, who had a classic inferiority complex, was endlessly forgiving. After lessons, such as they were, he liked to play billiards with the boys. He was extremely nearsighted, and when it was his turn at the cue, the boys substituted red apples for the red balls. Alger never caught on, and, as each new apple was demolished with his cue, would cry, “Oh, Lordy-me, I’ve broken another ball! I don’t know my own *strength!*”

But Alger had his compensations. J. & W. Seligman & Company opened an account in his name, took his literary royalties and invested them for him, and made him a wealthy man. He remained a friend of the Seligmans and, long after the boys were grown, was a regular guest at Sunday dinner, where the practical jokes continued.

There was one favorite. Joseph’s married daughter, Helene, and her husband lived with her parents. After dinner one of her brothers would steer Mr. Alger into the library and into a sofa next to Helene. There he would artfully drape one of Mr. Alger’s tiny arms around Helene’s rather ample waist while another brother ran from the room shouting, “Mr. Alger is trying to seduce Helene!” Helene’s husband would then rush into the room brandishing a bread knife, crying, “*Seducer!*” The first three times this happened, Horatio Alger fell to the floor in a dead faint. Perhaps he did teach the boys to be Americans after all.

A few other German Jewish families altered their names slightly to make them sound a bit more American. Stralem, for instance, was originally

Stralheim. Neustadt became Newton. Ickelheimer, which was certainly a mouthful, was telescoped to Isles. But the Seligmans rather frowned on this practice. It smacked of Belmont-ism.

Except for William. In the 1870's William Seligman, the most snobbish, probably, of the Seligman brothers, journeyed to New York from Paris for a conference with Joseph. William said, "Joe, now that we're getting to be men of substance, I suggest that we change our name."

Joseph looked at him for a moment with hooded, sleepy eyes, smiling his famous semismile. Then he nodded soberly. "I agree that you should change your name, William," he replied. "I suggest you change it to Schlemiel."

* To further confuse the situation, a number of Jewish families who had come to America before the Germans and who were not historically Sephardim began calling themselves "Sephardic" to escape the "Jew" label.

“THE HAUGHTY AND PURSE-PROUD ROTHSCHILDS”

There was one area in which August Belmont excelled. Its name was Rothschild. Belmont was not a spectacular, brilliant, or even “interesting” financier. He made few, if any, great financial coups. But men like Morgan liked to work with the European Rothschilds, and August Belmont, as their agent, was always there, helpful, collecting his percentage on the money that passed back and forth. When smaller bankers turned to him, he was never more than barely cooperative. When Goldman, Sachs, for instance, first dreamed of establishing an international operation, they approached a London firm called Kleinwort Sons & Company, to see if an English connection could be arranged. Since the Kleinworts did not “know” Sachs or Goldman, they discreetly inquired of the Rothschilds for a report on the New York firm’s standing. The Rothschilds didn’t know either, and passed the query along to Belmont. Belmont took his time about replying, but eventually sent back a note, via the Rothschilds, saying that Goldman, Sachs & Company was “one firm about which nobody can say anything against.”

From a distance of years, this lofty comment sounds like damning with faint praise. But, apparently, coming from Belmont, it was enough to reassure the Kleinworts. The connection was established, and Goldman, Sachs & Company were almost deliriously grateful to Belmont “for so generously indorsing us”—an indication of the awe in which Belmont was held on Wall Street.*

When Joseph Seligman was readily acknowledged as the leading Jewish banker in New York, equaling, if not exceeding, Belmont’s influence,

Joseph made several suggestions to Belmont that “you introduce us” to the Rothschilds, suggestions which Belmont ignored. William Seligman tried to meet the Rothschilds in Paris, and Joseph, on his European journeys, tried in London. But the Rothschilds maintained their customary aloofness. Cultivating a Rothschild in Europe seemed every bit as difficult as cultivating a Sephardic Jew in New York.

In 1874 Joseph made a bid to Grant’s new Secretary of the Treasury, Benjamin Bristow, to handle the sale of \$25 million worth of U.S. bonds. This plum seemed about to fall into Joseph’s lap when Bristow began to hedge. Bristow wanted, he said, “a stronger combination of bankers” behind the loan—a syndicate, in other words. He suggested “some strong European house,” and though he did not say so in so many words, his implication was clear—he wanted the Rothschilds. Politely Joseph questioned “the propriety of giving the Rothschilds a participation,” since they had given the Union such scant support during the Civil War. But the war had faded in everybody’s memory, and Bristow stood firm.

Privately, Joseph was more specific about his misgivings. Writing to his brothers, he said: “Now the President and Mr. Bristow appear both anxious that we and the Rothschild group should work together, as they say no one could beat that great combination ... [but] I fear that the haughty and proud Rothschilds would not let us come in as their peers, and I should not consent to join on any other terms.”

Joseph’s fears were well founded. The Rothschilds were the greatest private bank in the world and were unaccustomed to enter any deal they could not dominate. Joseph would have to come off his high horse a bit. Bristow contacted the Rothschilds, who replied from their citadel that they would handle the bond issue only if they were given a five-eighths share of it. The Seligmans, “or any other reliable house,” could have the “remainder.”

Joseph tried to bargain. This, he replied, was acceptable provided the Seligman name was included in all newspaper advertisements for the bonds in New York and “either in Paris or Frankfurt.” It was an important point. The position of a firm’s name on the “tombstone,” as a financial-page advertisement is called, is an indication of status.

Oh, no, replied the Rothschilds. They had said nothing about advertising, but now that Seligman had brought it up, they would have to make it clear

that the Seligman name was not to appear in the advertising at *all*. A little nervously, Joseph wrote to Isaac in London: “If by next week the Rothschilds have not acceded to such terms as you and Paris can honourably accept, I will make it hot for Rothschild, as I cannot conceive that Bristow will ignore us and give the loan to Rothschild, even if they outbid us, as we can be of use to the Administration, and Rothschild cannot.”

But Joseph was not able to make it quite hot enough. The Rothschilds grandly replied to Bristow that they “might consider” placing the Seligman name in the ads provided the Seligmans accepted an even smaller share of the issue than three-eighths. Two-eighths, for instance, might do. Joseph weighed the situation. From the standpoint of prestige, his name linked with the Rothschilds would be of great value. But he still felt it prudent to haggle. Perhaps, he suggested, they could settle somewhere between two-eighths and three-eighths—two-and-a-half-eighths, say, or six-sixteenths, or 31.25 percent. The Rothschilds appeared to grow bored with the argument, and replied that Joseph could, if he wished, have 28 percent of the issue and his name in the ads—below the name Rothschild, of course.

A weary Joseph wrote to Isaac: “We have at last advanced so far as to be able to join in a bid with Rothschild, which is, after all, a feather in our cap, and although our participation of 28% is small, I am contented.” From wanting to go in as a Rothschild “peer,” he had backed down to the point of accepting a little more than a one-quarter peerdom.

It took spunky Isaac in London to make the first face-to-face contact of a Seligman with a Rothschild. Isaac had had no qualms about confronting President Lincoln at a White House reception about Seligman coats, suits and uniforms. Now that the terms of the Rothschild-Seligman deal were set, Isaac marched off to Baron Lionel Rothschild’s mansion in Piccadilly. This crusty Baron, when elected to the House of Commons, had for eight years refused to swear his oath of admission unless the Old Testament was substituted for the Holy Bible, and the words “upon the true faith of a Christian” were omitted. When he finally won, he sat in Parliament for fifteen years without saying a word. At the Baron’s house, Isaac was passed through footmen and butlers to the Baron’s drawing room where the Baron sat. It was a Saturday, and the Baron rose stiffly from his chair and said, “I am a better Jew than you. You go to business on Saturdays. I do not. My

office is closed.” It was a dismissal, and it was a snub, but Isaac looked quickly around the room and saw that the Baron’s table was strewn with financial-looking documents. Said Isaac, “Baron, I think you do more business in this room on Saturdays than I do during the whole week in my office.” The Baron looked briefly flustered. Then his lips curved upward. That evening Isaac wrote home to Joseph: “Old Rothschild can be a jolly nice chap when he wishes.”

Now that Isaac had broken the Rothschild ice, Joseph wrote a three-page letter in elegant, almost obsequious praise of the Rothschilds, adding the instruction to Isaac, “Let the Baron read it.” The letter said: “Please say to the Baron that we feel highly honored in participating with his great house in negotiating the 5% U.S. Bonds; that we never concealed the fact from the President and the Secretary that the House of Rothschild (properly successful in all they undertake) would be certain to make a good market for the U.S. 5%’s.... We were quite satisfied in leaving the sole management in London to the Messrs. Rothschild.” Joseph continued his buttering up of the Rothschilds, name-dropping important American Seligman connections for several more lines, and concluded with a discreet sales pitch for future Rothschild business, saying he was sure that “the Baron will agree with us that our cooperation and joint management in New York will be of considerable advantage to the syndicate.” Through the whole letter ran this between-the-lines theme: How much nicer it will be, dear Baron, working with us in New York than with August Belmont, who is such a poor Jew.

But Joseph’s true feelings were best expressed in a note to Isaac in which he said snippily: “I am aware of the difficulty in dealing with so purse-proud and haughty a people as the Rothschilds, and were it not for the fact that it is an honor for us to be published in connection with them I would not have anything to do with the loan.” And yet Joseph added: “Having broken the ice, I wish you to cultivate this connection.”

There were other compensations. Joseph was able to write, with understandable pleasure: “Morgan—J. P. of Drexel, Morgan—is very bitter in his jealous expression about our getting the loan.”

Then, in the autumn of 1874, Baron Rothschild summoned Isaac Seligman to his office to give him a piece of news. Some \$55 million worth of United States bonds were to be offered for sale, and, the Baron

suggested, the issue might be backed by a combination of three houses—the House of Rothschild, the House of Morgan, and the House of Seligman. For the first time, August Belmont would act as agent for both the Rothschilds and J. & W. Seligman & Company. Needless to say, Isaac accepted. The Seligmans were now participating in the most powerful financial combination in the history of banking.

At last the Seligmans were able to consider themselves the Rothschilds' peers. The Seligman-Belmont-Morgan-Rothschild alliance, furthermore, was so successful that by the end of the decade there were complaints on Wall Street that “London- and Germany-based bankers” had a monopoly on the sale of United States bonds in Europe—which they virtually did. The Seligmans were now being called “the American Rothschilds,” and Joseph, beginning to believe his own splendid myth, went so far as to suggest that his brother Isaac should be knighted.*

In Paris party-loving, party-giving William Seligman, now weighing over 250 pounds, was a social success, and was meeting, as he wrote home to Joseph, “all the nobs.” Though Joseph had once disapproved of William’s frivolous pursuits, he now applauded them. His earlier threats of defection were forgiven, and Joseph wrote to William assuring him of the importance of the contacts he was making, urging him to meet more nobs. Joseph wrote to Richard C. McCormick, U.S. Commissioner General, to ask: “In filling the offices for Commissioners in Paris, please do not omit to appoint Mr. William Seligman, of course as Honorary Commissioner, without pay, as brother William is at the head of a large American banking house in Paris and entertains all nice Americans.” Joseph began instructing his other brothers to cultivate a Rothschildian kind of elegance and grandeur.

It worked with some better than others. At a large reception in Frankfurt, Henry Seligman found himself standing on the opposite side of the room from Baron Wilhelm von Rothschild of the Frankfurt branch. A friend whispered to Henry, “That’s Baron von Rothschild. Would you like to meet him?” “Certainly,” said Henry. “Bring him over.” The friend hurried across the room to the Baron and said, “Mr. Henry Seligman is here and would like to meet you.” “And I should very much like to meet *him*,” replied the Baron. “Bring him over.” Neither would cross the room. They never met.

In London Isaac understood the simple rule of Rothschild protocol. It was he who must always go to the Rothschild offices in New Court. The

Baron would never deign to visit him, and Isaac would not have had the impertinence to ask him to.

But in New York the Seligman-Rothschild alliance did little to further the Seligmans' progress toward assimilation. As the decade drew to a close, there were more dark mutterings of an "international conspiracy" of Jewish bankers to take over the world's money. These were still rumbling undercurrents, but it would take no more than a single curious and sad episode, an episode that might have been no more than a tempest in a teapot, to make these feelings erupt into the public consciousness.

*The Kleinworts of London were held in almost equal awe. Walter Sachs recalls how, as a boy of fifteen, he was groomed for weeks by his parents on how to behave at a Kleinwort dinner in Denmark Hill, and remembers the "terrible humiliation" at a gaffe he made there. On the evening of the dinner, he was so nervous that, when the Kleinworts' front door opened, he bowed and then shook hands with the chief butler.

*Isaac never was, but his son became Sir Charles Seligman several years later.

THE SELIGMAN-HILTON AFFAIR

Mr. Alexander T. Stewart was no stranger to Joseph Seligman. Stewart operated A. T. Stewart & Company, in Ninth Street, the largest retail store in New York. With its wholesale operation in Chicago, Stewart's was the biggest store in the country.

When the New York Railway Company was organized in 1871, with its plans for building the city's first elevated railroad, Joseph and Stewart were on the board of directors, along with Levi P. Morton, James Lanier, Charles L. Tiffany, August Belmont, and John Jacob Astor. The president of the line was a New York politician, Judge Henry Hilton. Judge Hilton's chief distinction was that he happened to be a friend and political crony of Mr. Stewart's, and a member of the Tweed Ring.

Despite their directorial connection, relations between Joseph and Mr. Stewart were not cozy. Stewart was also a friend of President Grant's, and when Grant had offered the Treasury post to Joseph Seligman, and had been turned down, he had offered it to Stewart, who said yes. Stewart's friendship with Judge Hilton and the Tweed Ring, however, had made him a number of powerful political enemies, and his appointment was not confirmed by the Senate. This was a bitter disappointment to Stewart, who had wanted a Cabinet post as the capstone of his career. The Scotsman bristled whenever he thought of Joseph Seligman, who had refused the appointment without even bothering to see whether the Senate would approve him or not. Joseph had also been asked to run on the Republican ticket for Mayor of New York, but had replied, "The bank needs me, and my brothers beg me to leave politics and public office to others." It was no secret that Alexander Stewart wanted to be Mayor. When he heard of

Joseph's refusal, Stewart said, "Who does Seligman think he is? He seems to think politics is only for tradespeople."

The uneasy situation was not helped when Joseph was appointed to the "Committee of Seventy"—a group of prominent New Yorkers whose purpose was to eradicate the Tweed Ring, and one of whose chief targets was Stewart's friend, Judge Hilton. Up to this point, A. T. Stewart & Company had been purchasing its bills of exchange from J. & W. Seligman & Company. When Joseph's membership on the committee was announced, this relationship suddenly terminated.

In 1876 Alexander Stewart died, leaving a fortune which turned out to be the largest ever recorded in America. Part of his estate was a two-million-dollar investment in the Grand Union Hotel in Saratoga. Stewart's executor was Judge Hilton.

Nobody in New York had paid much attention to Henry Hilton until he became the manager of Stewart's millions. Now he revealed to a society journalist that he was one of "a handful" of New York's most important men. Perhaps, but when Grant left the White House and Joseph and Jesse held a formal dinner at Delmonico's for the former President and "forty or fifty guests," Judge Hilton was not among those invited. Meanwhile, Joseph was going on to even greater triumphs. Wall Street jockeyed feverishly for position with the new President, Rutherford B. Hayes, and Hayes's Secretary of the Treasury Sherman. Early in 1877 Sherman summoned a representative group of New York bankers, including Joseph Seligman and August Belmont, to Washington, and sent each into a separate room "to work out a plan for refunding the balance of the Government war debt." Each man submitted his recommendations, and a week later Sherman sent for Joseph and told him that his plan was "by all odds the clearest and most practical," and would be adopted. (The plan called for building up a gold reserve of approximately 40 percent of the outstanding greenbacks through the sale of bonds for coin—something Joseph was good at.)*

After working at untangling the nation's finances through most of the spring, Joseph decided to take a vacation at Saratoga, and to stay at the Grand Union Hotel, which Judge Hilton now managed, where Joseph and his family had often stayed in the past.

Saratoga was then the queen of American resorts, outshining even Newport. Here, each summer, the cream of Eastern society arrived ritually

to take the waters of its famous spa, to promenade in parasoled elegance down its wide main avenue, through the spacious public rooms of its large hotels, to perch with top hat and cane on the famous verandas, and to change clothes. A trip to “season” at Saratoga was not to be undertaken lightly, and the capacious Saratoga trunk was invented to accommodate the wardrobes these holidays required. John “Bet-a-Million” Gates once bet a famous dude of the period, Evander Berry Wall, that he could not change his clothes as many as fifty times between breakfast and dinner at Saratoga, and won. Mr. Wall made it through only forty complete changes of costume.

No one traveled to Saratoga without at least one valet, one personal maid, and a laundress, and to arrive with one’s own chef was not uncommon. By far the grandest hotel in Saratoga was the Grand Union. In its day it was the world’s largest hostelry, covering seven acres of ground with 834 rooms, 1,891 windows, 12 miles of red carpeting and a solid square mile of marble tiling. The edifice and its furnishings were said to weigh seventeen million tons, though how this figure was arrived at is unclear.

Still, there is evidence that by 1877 the Grand Union had begun to lose business, and Stewart—and his successor, Judge Hilton—decided that this was because the hotel’s Christian guests did not wish to share the hotel with Jews. Joseph Seligman was therefore advised that the hotel had adopted a new policy and did not accept “Israelites.”

In view of the tremendous fuss this decision kicked up, one question has become curiously obscured which, today, seems pivotal. That is, did Joseph and his family actually *go* to Saratoga that summer or were they advised of the hotel’s new policy by mail? Accounts vary. One has it that Joseph “applied for accommodations,” and was rebuffed. Another says that he was told, upon arrival, that he could stay at the hotel this time, but would not be welcomed back “in future.” The majority of reports insists that a Seligman party did, physically, appear at the hotel and was turned away by a clerk at the desk, whereupon Joseph and party stalked out of the lobby and returned to New York.

If Joseph did go to Saratoga, he must have gone by train. When he traveled by train, he was usually supplied with a private car by one of his railroads, and he must have departed for Saratoga with the usual complement of trunks and retinue of servants. Did Joseph undertake this

ponderous journey to a famous and popular hotel without a reservation? Or did he in fact go to Saratoga knowing quite well what awaited him at the Grand Union, and was the purpose of his trip to make a test case of the hotel's anti-Semitic policy? His subsequent behavior suggests this, and if that was his intention, he may have acted unwisely.

Joseph reportedly "treated the whole matter of his repulse lightly," but Joseph was a fighter and was not in a lighthearted frame of mind when he wrote a scathing letter to Judge Hilton which he then released to the newspapers. The letter was a bitter personal attack on Hilton, and it made front-page copy, with headlines running:

A SENSATION AT SARATOGA. NEW RULES FOR THE GRAND UNION. NO JEWS TO BE ADMITTED. MR. SELIGMAN, THE BANKER, AND HIS FAMILY SENT AWAY. HIS LETTER TO MR. HILTON. GATHERING OF MR. SELIGMAN'S FRIENDS. AN INDIGNATION MEETING TO BE HELD.

There followed threats of lawsuits under civil rights laws, charges, countercharges, talk of boycotts and recriminations, ugly name-calling. Judge Hilton did not soothe injured feelings by releasing a letter of his own in which he said: "I know what has been done and am fully prepared to abide by it," and, "As the law yet permits a man to use his property as he pleases and I propose exercising that blessed privilege, notwithstanding Moses and all his descendants may object." Fanning the already raging fire, he added: "Personally, I have no particular feeling on the subject, except probably that I don't like this class as a general thing and don't care whether they like me or not. If they do not wish to trade with our house, I will be perfectly satisfied, nay gratified, as I believe we lose much more than we gain by their custom."

The summer of 1877 was a lean one for news and, in the days that followed, the press—in San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Baltimore, and in tiny towns across the country—leaped on the Hilton-Seligman story, featured it and editorialized about it, printing letters pro and con. In the middle of a performance of a New York play, a gentleman from the audience ran up on the stage and started to make an anti-Seligman speech while ladies in the boxes pelted him with their handbags. Both Joseph and Hilton received scurrilous and threatening letters. When Hilton

ran a letter in the *New York Times*, dropping the unpleasant hint that the Seligmans were little respected by their fellow bankers in Wall Street, officials of Drexel, Morgan & Company, Morton Bliss & Company, the First National Bank, and even August Belmont & Company, stepped forward in a paid announcement to say: “Judge Hilton is under a misapprehension as to the relations of the Messrs. Seligman and their associates, which always have been, and are, of the most satisfactory character.”

Judge Hilton then added confusion to the chaos by announcing that if Joseph had “taken the trouble” to apply to him, Hilton, “personally,” the hotel would have taken him in.

The furor grew more vicious, more barbed, with insinuations that the incident had actually nothing to do with anti-Semitism but was merely a business feud—that Joseph was miffed at having lost the Stewart account, and that Hilton was trying to ruin the Seligmans because of Joseph’s role in the anti-Tweed group. It did begin to seem like a money battle when, led by a group of Joseph’s friends, a massive boycott was undertaken against A. T. Stewart’s store, which Hilton also managed.

Suddenly frightened, Judge Hilton pledged \$1,000 to Jewish charities. A Seligman might have his price, but it was more than \$1,000. *Puck*, the comic weekly, ran a two-page cartoon in its Christmas issue of that year, mocking Hilton and, in an accompanying editorial, praised Jews for refusing to be bribed:

Alas! Poor Hilton.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Hilton is as unsuccessful as a drygoods man and a hotel-keeper as he notoriously was as a jurist. But the fact remains. He took it upon himself to insult a portion of our people, whose noses had more of a curvilinear form of beauty than his own pug, and he rode his high-hobby horse of purse-proud self-sufficiency until he woke up one day to find that the drygoods business was waning.... Then Mr. Hilton arouses himself. He turns his great mind from thoughts of the wandering bones of Stewart; he brings the power of his gigantic brain to bear upon the great question, “How shall I revive trade?” He has remembered that he has insulted the Jews. Aha! we’ll conciliate them. So out of the coffers that A. T. Stewart filled he

gropes among the millions and orders the trustees of a few Hebrew charities to bend the pregnant hinges of their knees at his door and receive a few hundred dollars.

But in this country the Jew is not ostracized. He stands equal before the law and before society with all his fellow-citizens, of whatever creed or nationality. And the Jew has stood up like a Man and refused to condone the gross and uncalled for insults of this haphazard millionaire, merely because he flings the offer of a thousand dollars in their faces. All honor to the Jews for their manly stand in this instance.

At the height of the rancor, Henry Ward Beecher, the most noted clergyman of the day, made the Saratoga incident the subject of one of his most celebrated sermons. Titled “Gentile and Jew,” Dr. Beecher declared from the pulpit:

I have had the pleasure of the acquaintance of the gentleman whose name has been the occasion of so much excitement—Mr. Seligman. I have summered with his family for many years ... and I have learned to love and respect them.... When I heard of the unnecessary offense that has been cast upon Mr. Seligman, I felt that no other person could have been singled out that would have brought home to me the injustice more sensibly than he.

But had Joseph been “singled out,” or had he singled himself out? What had he wanted? Had he, knowing of the hotel’s policy, appeared in Saratoga prepared to be excluded and hoping to create a *cause célèbre* in which he would emerge a hero, a champion of reason, in both the Jewish and the gentile communities? Or had he, knowing that the Grand Union barred Jews generally, simply not believed that it would bar him, a man of his position and distinction? Men like Beecher and the editors of *Puck* might hail him as a hero, but the Jewish community of New York was not sure that it had really required a champion of reason for resort hotels. As his old friend Wolf Goodhart said to him privately, “For God’s sake, Joe, didn’t you *know* that some hotels don’t want Jews? The Grand Union isn’t the only one!”

Months passed, and the affair continued to dominate the news as other clergymen, following Beecher’s example, had their say and as all figures of importance in New York felt called upon to take a stand. As plans for the

“mass protest meeting” in Union Square against Judge Hilton progressed, and as ill feeling continued to mount, with friends turned against each other over the matter, amid ugly cries of “Jew-hater!” and “Jew-lover!” and with anti-Semitic graffiti scrawled on walls, Joseph Seligman, now nearly sixty, grew increasingly aghast at the hornet’s nest of hatred he had stirred up. Privately, he began to beg that the matter be forgotten. At last he approached William Cullen Bryant, who, saying that the incident had already been commented upon “from the mouths of everybody in public places,” sensibly urged that the protest meeting be canceled. It was.

But the boycott on A. T. Stewart’s store continued, and had a good deal to do with the store’s eventual failure and sale to John Wanamaker.

Joseph tried to forget it. In the months that followed, he refused to speak of it.

The Seligman-Hilton affair was the first publicized case of anti-Semitism in America. But rather than extinguish anti-Semitic feeling, it kindled it. By pointing it up, Joseph had made it specific. He had solved no problem. He had merely defined one. Now the battle lines were drawn. The Grand Union’s policy gave other hotels and clubs a precedent, and anti-Semitism in Adirondack resorts quickly became quite blatant, with hotels boldly advertising, “Hebrews need not apply,” and “Hebrews will knock vainly for admission.” At Lake Placid, Melville L. K. Dewey built the largest club in the area, the Lake Placid Club, whose members, Dewey said, would be “the country’s best,” specifically:

No one will be received as member or guest against whom there is physical, moral, social, or race objection, or who would be unwelcome to even a small minority. This excludes absolutely all consumptives, or rather invalids, whose presence might injure health or modify others’ freedom or enjoyment. [Dewey himself had come to the mountains for his hay fever, and his wife suffered from “rose cold,” but apparently their sneezing was acceptable.] This invariable rule is rigidly enforced; it is found impracticable to make exceptions to Jews or others excluded, even when of unusual personal qualifications.*

Other Adirondack resorts, to complete the vicious circle, became exclusively Jewish.

At the height of the Seligman-Hilton affair, the New York Bar Association blackballed a Jew. A year later, the Greek-letter fraternities at City College barred Jewish members—a slight that Bernard Baruch never forgave.

The affair would not end, and the ugly wound it had opened would not heal. Soon Mr. Austin Corbin, president of the Long Island Railroad and of something called the Manhattan Beach Company, which was attempting to develop Coney Island into a fashionable summer resort along the lines of Newport, followed Judge Hilton's lead—and borrowed some of Hilton's language—with the announcement:

We do not like the Jews as a class. There are some well behaved people among them, but as a rule they make themselves offensive to the kind of people who principally patronize our road and hotel, and I am satisfied we should be better off without than with their custom.

Following generations would have to live with the tensions which the affair created. It was to have a profound psychological effect on German Jewish life in New York, making it more defensive and insular, more proud and aloof and self-contained, more cautious. These were tensions Joseph's children and grandchildren would face. Jews had been snubbed by hotels and clubs before. They had chafed at this treatment but, by overlooking it, had tried to rise above it. Now, however, it was out in the open and a fact of life: certain areas of America were closed to Jews.

The affair killed old Joe Seligman.

In the months that followed, it even seemed to affect his business judgment. His brother Abraham was his West Coast expert, but Abraham's advice was not always to be trusted. (It was Abraham who had got Joseph involved with Mr. S. H. Bohm and the Montana mining fiasco.) In 1878 Abraham urged Joseph to look into the doings of a German immigrant named Adolph Sutro in San Francisco, who had come up with a plan to build a half-mile tunnel beneath the Comstock Lode. Such a tunnel, said Abraham, "at once insures drainage, ventilation, and facilitates the work of getting the gold- and silver-bearing quartz above ground." All Sutro needed was half a million dollars to dig his hole, which he said would yield as much as six million a year in revenue.

Joseph was indignantly against it, and wrote to Abraham that the Sutro tunnel was “a visionary scheme doomed to failure,” and that “it would injure J. & W. Seligman & Co. as bankers in foreign exchange to be known as investing money in speculations of this kind.” But, because the tunnel plan involved putting railroad tracks through it, Joseph began quickly to warm up to the idea. Soon his firm had purchased 95,000 shares in the Sutro tunnel at approximately a dollar a share, and Joseph congratulated Abraham for his foresight. “I will do Brother Abm the justice that he was the only one who stuck through thick & thin to his scheme,” Joseph wrote proudly. But by the time the tunnel was finished in 1879 it was too late to be of any aid to the diminishing Comstock Lode. Sutro himself, more farsighted than anybody, sold out his interest in the tunnel at a handsome profit. But the Seligmans hung on, and the stock became worthless.

That winter, looking ill and tired and old, Joseph traveled to Florida, with Babet and their son, George Washington, for a month of rest and sunshine. From there the Seligmans went to New Orleans, where Joseph’s oldest daughter Frances and her husband, Theodore Hellman, were living.

March 31 was a hot and humid Sunday, and there was the usual large and heavy family midday meal. Afterward, Joseph said that he would like to take a nap and went upstairs.

A little later there was a cry from the floor above. The family hurried to Joseph’s side, and Frances Hellman, writing to her brother Edwin who was then a student at Heidelberg, said:

Our Papa said to me that he had such a strange sensation, just as if he were going to be paralyzed. Of course we laughed at this & told him it was only the effect of the heat and his too heavy slumber. When the doctor arrived, dear Papa brightened visibly ... and when dinner time came he insisted upon dear Mama going down stairs, saying he had a good appetite also. We sent his dinner up, he ate it with relish, and all of a sudden called to Mary [the Hellmans’ maid] who was standing by his side for brandy. She handed him the glass, he tried to take it with his left hand, but it sank lifeless to his side—his left side had instantaneously become paralyzed. Mary put the brandy to his lips, he drank, and then laid his head back in the chair, closed his eyes quietly, and sank into the deep sleep from which he never woke. Just

as his consciousness left him, he raised Mary's hand and gently stroked and patted it several times, evidently thinking that dear Mama stood beside him. So you see even his very last thought was a happy one.

During the final years of his life, Joseph had described himself as "a freethinker." Nowadays he would doubtless be called an atheist. Under the influence of Felix Adler, Joseph had helped found, and become president of, the Ethical Culture Society. Joseph had directed that his funeral services be conducted by the Society. But, since the Seligman-Hilton affair had labeled Joseph "America's leading Jew," it was unthinkable to Dr. Gustav Gottheil, chief rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, that the temple should not conduct the rite. Dr. Gottheil was backed by Joseph's brother James, who disapproved of Adler and who was president of the temple's board of trustees. The temple and the Society argued over which should properly hold the services, while Joseph became, even in death, the center of another religious controversy.

Finally Frances Hellman wrote, again to her brother Edwin in Germany:

After much (and what I consider simply *disgraceful*) resistance on the part of some of our relatives whom I don't need to mention, it has been decided that Felix Adler *only* will conduct the funeral services at the house—Gottheil and Dr. Lilienthal are to speak at the grave. I consider it wrong, and not in conformity with our dear father's life that Gottheil should speak at *all*. But it seems that it could not be prevented.

Frances then added proudly:

Oh, my dear Edwin, if you could but read the papers, see the many letters received from Christian gentlemen, all but with one import, all bearing upon the goodness, the honesty, the nobleness, the talents and charity of our dear father, it would be to you as it is to us, a great consolation, the grandest legacy he could have left to his children.

There were other legacies, some large and some small. Among the items in the papers was the note that the village of Roller's Ridge, Missouri, through which one of Joseph's railroads passed, had voted to change its

name and would thereafter be known as Seligman, Missouri, in tribute to the great man's life.

The newspapers also speculated on the size of Joseph's financial legacy, which was assumed to be "in excess of fifty millions." When his estate was tallied, however, it amounted to slightly more than a million dollars. Out of this, a bequest of \$25,000 was divided among sixty different charities, Jewish and non-Jewish, but he had given away far more than that figure in his lifetime. If he had lived longer, he would probably have died wealthier; all his brothers died richer than he.

There was no letter of condolence from Judge Henry Hilton.

And Joe Seligman was gone. To those closest to him, it seemed that something more important than his life had ended. To other German Jewish bankers, who had been waiting in the wings, it seemed as though something were beginning.

*The plan worked so well that within two years the dollar was quoted at par for the first time since 1861.

* In 1965 R. Peter Straus, a strategist in Senator Robert F. Kennedy's 1964 campaign, publicly criticized the Senator's brother-in-law, Stephen E. Smith, for staying at the Lake Placid Club, "which is known to discriminate against Jewish people."

PART IV

THE AGE OF SCHIFF

“A COMPLEX ORIENTAL NATURE”

By the 1870's nearly all the pivotal “Old Guard” names of German Jewish finance—with the exception of the Guggenheims—had migrated to New York City. Familiar on the streets of downtown Manhattan were the two Lehman brothers, prospering as cotton brokers. Marcus Goldman, with bits of commercial paper filling out the lining of his tall silk hat, was still a one-man operation. Two Strauses, Lazarus and son Isidor, who, like the Seligmans and Lehmans, had been peddlers and small shopowners in the prewar South, had moved to New York from Georgia and had opened the glassware and crockery department at R. H. Macy & Company. Solomon Loeb, at his wife's insistence, had come to New York from Cincinnati and, though not on a par with the Seligmans' operations, his Kuhn, Loeb & Company was becoming an important investment banking house.

In Philadelphia the Guggenheims were not doing at all badly. Meyer Guggenheim had sold his stove-polish and lye company for \$150,000 and was branching out in other directions—importing herbs and spices, Swiss laces and embroidery. He had also done some speculating in the stock market. He invested \$84,000 in the Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad, which, he had heard, Jay Gould had his eye on. Guggenheim bought in at \$42 a share, and soon had the pleasure of watching his stock soar to over \$200 and then selling his holdings for half a million. His wife was beginning to long for the headier atmosphere of New York, too.

In New York, after their mornings of shopping and errands, while their husbands marched the downtown streets, the ladies gathered in their uptown drawing rooms for their afternoons, in their little circle of friends, their little crowd. The ladies all owned silver tea services, and the tea service was the heart of the brownstone. In their best dresses and hats, with their reticules

tucked in the cushions of the seats beside them, they discussed the feminine topics of the day—children, clothes, servants, health (with a heavy emphasis on obstetrics), and marriage—in formal German. (It was beginning to be considered bad form to use Yiddish.) Several women had marriageable daughters. There were a number of still unwed Seligman daughters, and there was Mrs. Solomon Loeb's Therese—a stepdaughter, yes, but as much a daughter as any of her others—who had developed into a beauty. There were eligible Seligman sons and Lehman boys. The ladies enjoyed planning matches for their daughters, asking each other, "*Waere sie nicht passend für ...?*" ("Wouldn't she be suitable for ...?") and considering the possible results.

There were also several young men who had recently arrived in New York from Germany. There was one particular bright and handsome boy who, barely out of his teens, had opened his own brokerage house. His name was Jacob Schiff.

Of course there were two schools of thought, among the ladies, as to whether it was wiser for a daughter to marry a German-born or an American-born boy. The German-born might at any moment decide to return to Germany, bearing off the daughter with him, forever. It was risky.

The ladies were not the only ones who were interested in young Jacob Schiff. American industry and government still relied heavily on European financing. New York bankers worked hard to cultivate European contacts, and looked over young banking talent from Europe with particular care. Here, very definitely, was talent of an unusual sort. At the same time, any young man with talent enough to enter the banking business was also expected to be able to enter the family.

Jacob Schiff has been described by one contemporary as "a patient, skillful man, a suave diplomat with a complex Oriental nature." Complex, yes, but out of the complexity of his character an extraordinary single-mindedness emerges as his most marked trait. From the very beginning, he seems to have known exactly what he wanted.

The Schiffs of Frankfurt-am-Main often compared themselves to the Rothschilds of the same city. (Jacob Schiff was of a younger generation of immigrants than the Seligmans, a generation that was coming not from poor country families but from wealthy city ones as well.) In the eighteenth century the Schiffs and Rothschilds shared a double house in the Frankfurt

Judengasse where the identifying house signs, “*Zum Schiff*” and “*Zum Roten Schild*,” hung alongside each other until one of the Schiffs, already prosperous enough to move to London, sold the balance of the house to the first rich Rothschild, Meyer Amschel. If pressed, Schiffs usually admitted that, though not so collectively wealthy as the Rothschilds, theirs was the more august family. The Rothschilds were known only as big money-makers. The Schiff family tree contained not only successful bankers but distinguished scholars and members of the rabbinate. There was, for instance, the seventeenth-century Meir ben Jacob Schiff, composer of notable commentaries on the Talmud, and David Tevele Schiff, who in the late eighteenth century became chief rabbi of the Great Synagogue of England. The Schiffs can also demonstrate that they are a much *older* family than the upstart Rothschilds. The Schiff pedigree, carefully worked out in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, shows the longest continuous record of any Jewish family in existence, with Schiffs in Frankfurt going back to the fourteenth century.

Jacob Schiff actually traced his ancestry even farther back than that—to the tenth century B.C., no less, and to none other than Henriette Seligman’s ancestor, King Solomon and, thence, to David and Bathsheba, where he chose to stop tracing. Jacob Schiff took his descent from the King of Israel seriously, and a comparison of the careers of the two men, nearly three thousand years apart, is helpful. Like Jacob Schiff, Solomon was skilled in foreign commerce, importing, on a lavish scale, “gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks.” Solomon, too, sought to make his position more secure by allying himself with his larger, more powerful neighbors and, to cement his relationship with Egypt, married the Pharaoh’s daughter.

From the moment he made his appearance in the world, Jacob Schiff was a figure to be reckoned with. He was a restless, unpredictable child—sullen at times, then suddenly sunny, given to quick and violent bursts of anger that would just as quickly pass. He had something known as “the Schiff temper.” As he grew older he grew more rebellious and temperamental. He was short in stature—even as a mature man he stood only five two in his stocking feet (“If,” as an older member of the family says, “you can ever picture Mr. Schiff out of his shoes and spats”)—and the shortness may have accounted for his somewhat Napoleonic manner. But he was physically well knit and well coordinated, careful about his waistline and a believer in

fitness. Even at ten, he was always exercising, walking, cycling. Older, bigger boys thought twice before tangling with young Jacob—as they were to continue to do through his lifetime. He had clear skin, a wide forehead, and large blue eyes that he inherited from his mother, who indulged him and spoiled him. His relationship with his father was less secure.

Moses Schiff was a successful stockbroker on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange. There were five Schiff children—a brother, Philip, and a sister, Adelheid, older than Jacob, and two younger brothers. In 1863, at the age of sixteen, Jacob went to work for his father. A year later, Moses Schiff wrote to an American cousin in St. Louis:

At present, all goes well with us. My eldest son, Philip, is of great assistance to me in my business. My daughter is engaged to be married to a very brilliant man, Alfred Geiger, the nephew of the philosopher [Abraham Geiger was then head of the Frankfurt synagogue], very clever and very orthodox. My second son, now 17—Jacob—is quite a problem because he already feels that Frankfurt is too small for his ambition. I would like to hear from you whether, if I gave my permission, perhaps your brother-in-law would take him back with him, and he could continue to live the life of an orthodox Jew, which is of great importance to me.

In due time, the St. Louis cousin replied, saying that Moses was certainly very lucky to have a son like Philip. He was sorry that Moses' other son, Jacob, was a problem. He certainly knew what problems boys like that could be. If Frankfurt was too small for Jacob's ambition, St. Louis would be even smaller.

But Jacob Schiff had plans of his own. At the age of eighteen he left Frankfurt, ostensibly for a few months' visit to England. In England he spent several days writing a series of letters to his mother. He gave these to a friend with instructions that they be posted, at regularly stated intervals, until he could write to her from New York, where he was headed all along, to say that he had safely crossed the Atlantic.

Every detail of his journey had been carefully worked out in advance. He had \$500 in savings, and he was met in New York, as arranged, by a fellow Frankfurter named William Bonn, who was with the Frankfurt house of Speyer & Company. Bonn took young Schiff back with him to his

boardinghouse and, to Jacob's "delight" (as he wrote home), invited him to move in with him. The Bonns, he reminded his mother, were "of the higher levels of the social layer cake" in Frankfurt. The two men sat up all night making schedules and plans.

Bonn supplied Jacob with Wall Street introductions, and presently, in 1867, Jacob Schiff was ready to form his own brokerage firm with Henry Budge and Leo Lehmann (no kin to the single-"n" Lehmans), both ex-Frankfurt boys like himself.

When the partnership papers were drawn and ready for signature, it was a brief embarrassment to the new firm to discover that the youngest partner, Jacob Schiff, was not yet of legal age to sign.

“YOUR LOVING KUHN, LOEB & COMPANY”

In a photograph taken years later, after the great J. P. Morgan had admitted him as his only equal, Jacob Schiff stands squarely, solidly, addressing the world; his frock coat is smoothly buttoned across his comfortable middle; not a trace of humor lights his calm, impassive face. From his almost total lack of expression, one's eyes are drawn, instead, to the plump competence of his small hands. Yet in another portrait, a painting done at nearly the same time, we see a different Jacob Schiff. He is seated in a club chair, unbuttoned, relaxed, one hand draped carelessly across the arm of the chair, the other cradling his chin. His lips form the barest trace of a sardonic smile, and his blue eyes shine with a kind of wry amusement. He seems to be waiting for some pleasant event, which he has already predicted, to happen. Here is a man of wit, urbanity, and wisdom.

Somewhere between these two aspects of him lay the mysterious clue to his character, for Jacob Schiff could be exquisitely poised and logical and patient, and he could also be irrational and arbitrary and petty and demanding.

He liked large things—large cities, large houses, and large sums of money, such as those represented on two canceled checks which he eventually framed and hung on the wall of his office: one for \$49,098,000 and another for \$62,075,000, both written over his signature within a six months' period for loans he had floated for the Pennsylvania Railroad. He also liked to wield large authority. The very name Schiff rings with command. Historians have often speculated about the influence of names on personalities. Adolf Hitler might never have attained such heights of power

and brutality if he had retained the name Schicklgruber. Could August Belmont have achieved the grandeur and social position he wanted as August Schönberg? The name Schiff has another connotation—the ship that would one day sail forth as one of the flagships of American finance. Could Schiff have reached his goals if he had worn the name of one of his ancestors, Zunz?

One thing was certain from the start: he could never be a good employee. He could not even be a good partner. He had to dominate. His partnership with Budge and Lehmann did not work out well, and Schiff began looking elsewhere. He was offered the managership of the Deutsche Bank in Hamburg and, in one of his rare steps backward, accepted the post and returned to Germany. But he was still restless, dissatisfied. Commercial banking bored him. Its business—taking deposit accounts, making cautious loans—was too cut and dried.

There was another problem. By 1870 the first openly anti-Semitic parties had been formed in Germany, and politicians were vying for the votes of anti-Semites. As the power of these corrosive elements grew, even Bismarck, who had ignored them in the beginning, then scorned them, now had to cater to them in order to have their votes and remain in power. This development gave anti-Semitism its first patina of respectability, and made the future for young Jews in Germany seem more uncertain. The most promising development during his Hamburg sojourn was Jacob Schiff's meeting the Warburg family, very much of the Jewish "social layer cake" in that city. Two of the sons of Moritz and Charlotte Warburg—Paul and Felix, who later became so important in Schiff's life—always remembered the elaborate toy fort the young banker presented to the Warburg children on one of his visits.

In Germany, one of the men Jacob Schiff met was Abraham Kuhn, the homesick founding partner of Kuhn, Loeb, who had returned to Frankfurt. Impressed with the energetic young man, Kuhn suggested he write to Solomon Loeb in New York and offer his services. In addition to supplying his name to the firm's letterhead, it was perhaps Abraham Kuhn's most significant achievement. Schiff did as Kuhn advised. Loeb accepted. When Schiff got to New York in 1873, he was twenty-six, Solomon Loeb was forty-four, and Kuhn, Loeb & Company was a babe of six.

In one of his earliest letters to his mother during his first stay in New York, Schiff had spoken of “the enormous opportunities in railroading and all that” in the new country. Now, in New York again, he began to concentrate on railroads in earnest. Here was the first indication that he would become a very different sort of financier from Joseph Seligman. Schiff had been watching the Seligmans’ railroad activities carefully, and he was soon certain that he knew what it was the Seligmans were doing wrong. Joe Seligman had had no interest whatever in how railroads were run or why, and looked at them only as a means for taking profits. Schiff decided to make himself an expert on railroad management, on the reasons for railroads’ existence, the needs they filled, their potentialities, and the role they could eventually play in relation to other industries and the American economy. With the somewhat edgy blessings of his senior partner, Mr. Loeb, Jacob began using the considerable resources of Kuhn, Loeb & Company to buy into—and befriend—railroads.

Soon Schiff, too, was on the board of directors of the Erie, which had caused the Seligmans so much woe. A railroad directorship, the details of which had been not much more than a nuisance to Joe Seligman, fascinated Schiff. He could now study a line from the inside as well as from without. Before long, his mind had achieved such a grasp of American railroading that a friend was able to say of him, “He carries every railroad in the country, every bit of rolling stock, every foot of track, and every man connected with each line—from the president down to the last brakeman—inside his head.”

The kind of services Schiff began to perform for railroads were later described by one of his junior partners, Otto Kahn. “A railroad, or some particular officer of a railroad,” Kahn said, “would come to us and would say, ‘We have such and such a problem to solve. We would like to get your advice as to the best kind of security to issue for that purpose—a security which gives to the railroad the most powerful instrument, not only for immediate but also for long-term purposes, and gives the public the greatest possible protection without tying up the railroad unduly and beyond what is safe for it.’ So, he says, ‘Will you tell us what is the best kind of instrument to use for that purpose? Should it be a mortgage bond, a debenture, a convertible bond, preferred stock, an equity? We would like you to look into it and tell us. Here are a few facts and figures. Go through them.’”

Schiff and Kuhn, Loeb, Kahn admitted, “have sometimes been stuck by not knowing what kind of securities would be most advantageous from all standpoints to issue. We would know that in a short while from now other large security issues are likely to come upon the market. We would know what is the general disposition of the security market—favorable or unfavorable. Is there an investment demand, or isn’t there an investment demand? And that situation varies. Sometimes we can sell nothing but equities. Sometimes equities are thrown into the discard and people want safety. Again, that is our job to know.” Finally, Kahn repeated the motto that had been drummed into him by his mentor, Jacob Schiff: “Our only attractiveness is our good name and our reputation for sound advice and integrity. If that is gone our business is gone, however attractive our show window might be.”

Jacob Schiff’s approach to railroad financing was, in other words, very like that of J. P. Morgan. Schiff set himself up from the beginning as a friend of railroad management, as a champion of those whose money was actually invested in the stocks and bonds of the carriers. He stood opposed to the speculators and entrepreneurs and promoters, and to the deliberate wreckers of railroads such as the Seligmans’ old client, Jay Gould. Schiff, furthermore, who was ten years younger than Morgan, was also able to get a significant head start on Morgan when it came to railroads. Morgan’s first railroad achievement of any size was his ability, in 1879, to dispose of 250,000 shares of William H. Vanderbilt’s New York Central, quietly, in London, so that the stock’s price would not plummet on the New York market. For this sale, which totaled \$36.5 million, Morgan received a fee of \$3 million along with an elaborate tea service from a grateful Mr. Vanderbilt. But Jacob Schiff, two years before this, in 1877, had achieved a notable, if somewhat less profitable, feat of his own for the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad. His fee: \$500,000.

Schiff was a young man in a position to move with the tide. For the next thirty years railroads would completely dominate the American financial scene, and Schiff from the beginning was determined that Kuhn, Loeb & Company should dominate the field of railroad financing. Morgan, lulled, no doubt, by his three-million fee from Vanderbilt, and by his belief that he had been “chosen by circumstance and inheritance as the heir of North America,” joined the Union League and the New York Yacht Club. He

bought a town house—the square brown mansion that still stands at 219 Madison Avenue—and a two-thousand-acre estate on the Hudson, called “Cragston.” The sleek black hull of his *Corsair I* slid from its ways and into yachting history.

Jacob Schiff, meanwhile, was collecting railroad clients. Within a few years, these included the Pennsylvania; the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul; the Baltimore & Ohio; the Chesapeake & Ohio; the Denver & Rio Grande; the Great Northern; the Gulf, Mobile & Northern; the Illinois Central; the Kansas City Southern; the Norfolk & Western; the Missouri Pacific; the Southern Pacific; the Texas & Pacific; and the Union Pacific. He may have “sometimes been stuck,” but apparently was not stuck often. Schiff, according to his biographer, Cyrus Adler, “rarely made a mistake in business judgment.” As his handling of railroad finances grew more agile and adroit, so did Kuhn, Loeb’s profits increase. Solomon Loeb, who at first had distrusted railroads—they seemed too risky—looked at the firm’s balance sheet and was pleased. Schiff was never a man who willingly released figures, but Otto Kahn once said that for floating and selling a modest little ten-million-dollar railroad bond issue Kuhn, Loeb was compensated with “around or about a million dollars.”

And there were other compensations, several of which Schiff considered more important than silver tea services. One was the permission he received from Solomon Loeb to “deal direct” with European bankers on money matters that concerned railroads. Schiff pointed out that he was “more up-to-date” on foreign banking methods than Loeb, and, besides, the older man should be relieved of some of his “heavy responsibilities.” Loeb seems to have agreed to this without considering the consequences—which were, of course, that European bankers were suddenly corresponding with Jacob H. Schiff, the junior partner, instead of with the older members of the firm.

Another was the railroad education he was receiving from a doughty little Minnesotan—who everybody said was half Indian—named James Jerome Hill. Hill was being called Vanderbilt’s chief rival for the title of America’s most powerful railroad owner. Hill, like Vanderbilt, was a banking client of J. P. Morgan. “But I,” Jacob Schiff said significantly, “am his *friend*.”

Solomon and Betty Loeb had a large, comfortable town house at 37 East Thirty-eighth Street between Madison and Park, one of the prettiest

residential streets in Murray Hill. The Victorian era is not celebrated for beauty of interior decor, and the Loeb house was no exception to other rich men's houses of the period. It was filled with large, ugly, and expensive objects; one had to thread one's way across the rooms through statuary, potted palms, pedestal tables with marble tops, and ottomans. The windows and doorways were heavy with hangings of pigeon's-blood velvet, and there were quantities of plush and long gold fringe everywhere. Solomon Loeb had collected a few good period paintings, mostly of the Barbizon School and works by Bouguereau and Meissonier, but his walls were also hung with huge, stilted family portraits, plus a number of Solomon's own pencil sketches which he copied laboriously from prints as a form of weekend recreation. Also prominently displayed was a tinted photograph of baby James Loeb, naked on a red velvet cushion. (Even when he became a young man and protested, Betty Loeb would not take it down.) The house smelled cozily of wax and varnish, of Solomon's cigars and Betty's dinners.

Betty Loeb had little interest in clothes, favoring sprawly prints and large collars which did little to flatter her expanding figure. She loved to serve good food and she loved to eat, and her Sunday dinners had become famous in the little crowd—nearly as much an institution as the Seligmans' Saturdays. Her food was famous for its quality and its quantity. Guests, leaving her groaning boards, often had to lie down for several hours. She always explained that she served "a little extra" on Sunday so there would be enough left over for her to serve at her ladies luncheon on Monday, but there was usually a great deal left over after the Monday lunches, too.

Betty Loeb was as overpowering a mother as she was a hostess. Therese, who knew that Betty was not her real mother, always treated her as though she were. Among Therese's possessions was a small and faded tintype of Fanny Kuhn Loeb, the only record of her mother's existence in the Loeb house. It stood on a candlestand beside Therese's bed, and whenever her young friends asked her who the woman in the picture was, she shyly replied, "A relative." (Her half-sisters and -brothers were grown before they learned that their father had had another wife.)

Betty presented Solomon with four more children of her own—Morris, Guta, James, and Nina—and she tended to all five with an almost consuming passion. Betty was so fierce about educating them that every minute of their waking lives was organized into lessons. There were music

lessons, dancing lessons, riding lessons, tennis lessons, singing lessons, sewing lessons, German, French, Italian, Hebrew, and Spanish lessons. The children were so hovered over by tutors, governesses, nurses, and household servants that they could do almost nothing for themselves. Morris, who had always been dressed by nurses, was twelve years old before he learned that there was a difference between his left shoe and his right. Therese, at eighteen, could do exquisite needlepoint, but was unable to button her own dress.

Betty organized the four younger children into a piano and string quartet—Guta at the piano, Morris at the viola, James at the cello, and Nina at the violin—and there were Sunday morning concerts in the Loeb's Pompeian music room. If Betty liked what the children played, she would say, with deep satisfaction, "*Das war Musik!*" If displeased with a performance, she would mutter, "*Hmph! Musik?*" and there would be extra hours of practice in the afternoon. To stimulate her children's talents, she populated her Sunday dinner tables with visiting conductors, singers, composers, dancers, and musicians. She even hired musical servants. Apologizing for a particularly inept young butler, she said, "He's very musical. I promised to give him violin lessons in the front basement."

Her youngest daughter, Nina, had once told Betty that she wanted to be a ballet dancer. The ballet lessons were intensified accordingly. But Nina fell from a goat-drawn cart one summer at the family's country place on the Hudson, seriously crippling one leg. For several years the little girl wore a heavy weight on her injured leg which was intended to stretch it to the length of the other, but which did no good. Betty took her daughter to bone specialists all over the United States and Europe—and to a few quacks as well—trying to find someone who would help Nina walk normally again. One of the many doctors had said to Betty, "Don't worry. Your daughter will dance when she's eighteen." On the morning of her eighteenth birthday, Betty said to Nina, "You're eighteen. Now you must dance." And Nina rose from her wheelchair and, in terrible pain, with tears streaming down her face, danced, to please her mother.

Business consumed Solomon Loeb's life to the extent that the children consumed Betty's. Business absorbed him so much that, writing to one of his sons at school, he absent-mindedly signed the letter, "Your loving Kuhn, Loeb & Company."

When Kuhn, Loeb first opened its Nassau Street doors, the president of the National Bank of Commerce had come to Solomon and told him that he was sure the new firm would be a success. Solomon asked him why, and the president replied, "Because you know how to say no." This blossomed into a business rule of Solomon's: "Always say no, first. You can always change your mind and say yes. But once you have said yes you are committed." He used to tell his sons, "I have become a millionaire by saying no." But he found it hard to say no to Betty. Whenever she wanted something, she approached him briskly and said, "Now, Solomon, first of all say no. Then let me tell you what I have in mind."

One of the things she had in mind in 1873, when Jacob Schiff joined the firm, was the immediate future of Therese, who had just turned twenty. Jacob found himself a frequent guest at Betty's Sunday dinners and, more frequently than he may have realized, under the scrutinous gaze of the lady of the house. Jacob and Betty Loeb hit it off well; they discussed music, art, politics, but most particularly Jacob Schiff's future plans. Jacob's brief return to Germany worried Betty. Did that indicate a rootlessness on his part, an unwillingness to settle down? Betty had said her final farewells to the old country. She was committed to America now, and had no intention of seeing any of her children carried off to any other part of the world. But Jacob assured her that he would never move back to Germany. He did as she suggested, took out his American citizenship papers, and this convinced her.

In Jacob Schiff, Betty began to sense a kindred spirit, a will as strong as her own, and an ambition as huge as hers. Now that he was a citizen, Betty seated Jacob next to Therese, with the other young people "below the salt." From her end of the polished table, above the salt, Betty watched as Jacob and Therese conversed. Therese was cameo-faced, blue-eyed, small, and dainty, and she blushed prettily when Jacob spoke to her. Whenever Betty saw Jacob speak to the lady on his left, Betty would exercise the hostess' prerogative and "turn the conversation," so that Jacob was confronted with Therese again.

By some mysterious process, the more the two young people saw of each other, the greater were the responsibilities given to Jacob Schiff at the Kuhn, Loeb office. When Solomon Loeb came home at night and mentioned a problem at the office, Betty would inquire, "What does Mr.

Schiff think? Have you asked Mr. Schiff? Why don't you let Mr. Schiff handle that?" To Therese, Betty said, "Mr. Schiff is very handsome, isn't he? And your father says he is a brilliant businessman. The girl who marries him will be very lucky."

In 1874 Jacob Schiff wrote to his mother in Frankfurt, saying: "I know you haven't any clear conception of what an American girl is like. You may think she is rather uncultured and even a feminist—but don't imagine that of the girl I've selected. She might have been brought up in the best of German families."

Clara Schiff replied, urging her son to be gentle with this girl, cautioning him to curb his famous temper because "A word spoken hastily in anger would leave lifelong scars."

A few months later, Jacob wrote:

Beloved Mother,

I feel impelled to write to you by this mail, so that if I have calculated well, this letter will reach you on my wedding day.

My feelings for you and my thoughts, now that I approach this important time of my life, I cannot express in words. You have not only borne me, you have also guided me, so that, after some youthful indiscretions, I can now say to myself that I have become a good and moral man, and I may take the wife that I have chosen for life to the altar.

You, my dear Mother, I have to thank for all this guidance, for every good advice, every moral stems from you, and you gave me these precepts in such a way that they made a lasting impression on me.

And now on my festive day, you cannot be with me but I will be thinking of you. I know that in spirit you will be with us and bless us. More I cannot say to you today. Therese and I will always be your devoted children, and, God willing, I will be very happy with my girl.

Millions of kisses to you and my sister and brothers.

Your Jacob

As usual, he had not only "calculated well"; he had calculated perfectly. Jacob Schiff and Therese Loeb were married in New York on May 6, 1875, and Jacob's letter to his mother arrived in Frankfurt in that morning's mail.

The young couple moved into a large brownstone at Fifty-third Street and Park Avenue, their wedding present from Solomon and Betty Loeb.

A loving Kuhn, Loeb & Company gave Jacob another present—a full partnership in the firm. He was on his way to becoming the most renowned of all the Schiffs, to eclipsing all the others except, perhaps, his ancestor King Solomon. And, already, in the Kuhn, Loeb offices, when a decision was to be made, men had begun to whisper—out of Solomon Loeb’s earshot, “Why don’t we see what Mr. Schiff says?”

Solomon Loeb had made a business asset out of saying no. His son-in-law, to any money-making proposition, usually had the opposite reply.

THE EMERGING GIANTS

Jacob's Seligman-watching was teaching him several things. Joseph Seligman, by nature and by instinct, had been a moneylender who operated best out of his hip pocket. When it came to selling stocks and bonds at their best possible markets, he was brilliant. He was a manipulator. But Joseph Seligman had had a blind spot. He understood figures, but not the physical products or properties the figures represented. When it came to railroads, Joseph did not even use them much, and there is evidence that he considered them an essentially unsafe means of transportation. When he and his brothers helped finance New York's first elevated railway, Joseph ruled that no two Seligmans could ride the "el" at the same time lest, in case of accident, the bank suffered a wholesale loss of partners. He had made short trips in his private car between New York and Saratoga but, with the exception of his one trip to California, made few rail journeys of any length. He had, at one point, invited a group of fifteen tycoons for a two weeks' trip in private cars to promote shares in one of his lines, but the junket was a fiasco and most of the guests left the train before the trip was over. (One story has it that the men had expected Joseph to provide them with "female companionship" during the journey, and were furious to find that the entertainment planned for the whole two weeks was nothing but "cards, chess, and crokinole.")

The rationale of railroads, which Joseph never seemed to grasp, was that railroads opened up lands which could be sold to settlers who, in turn, would provide a traffic of goods and people which would make the railroads pay. In one of his more dismal railroad ventures, however, Joseph demonstrated that he had only a rudimentary knowledge of the kind of land which settlers liked to settle. This was his famous "Aztec Land" deal where,

having failed to interest investors in a large stretch of Arizona—part of his Atlantic & Pacific Railroad holdings—Joseph suggested forming the Aztec Land and Cattle Company to use the land for cattle-raising. The only trouble was that the land, a vast stretch of unirrigated desert, was no more habitable for cattle than it was for people.

Jacob Schiff, on the other hand, saw that it was not enough to be merely a financier when dealing with railroads. One had to be an organizer as well. Before backing a railroad, he insisted on going over every mile of track. He interviewed shippers and line officials, poked about in warehouses, peered into cabs of locomotives, and talked to engineers, brakemen, and conductors. He inspected freight cars and signal mechanisms, and whenever he found anything out of order he made a note of it. Schiff's memoranda to the management of his lines pointed out such details as a mile of weed-grown track that left "a poor impression" on travelers; a passenger car whose windows needed washing; a tipsy conductor; a station that needed a fresh coat of paint; a "bumpy stretch" of track. No wonder he never backed a railroad—as Joseph Seligman had—that had no place to go, or no means of crossing the Colorado River.

The Morgan group had, for good reason, been leery of dealing with the Seligmans when it came to railroads. Morgan admired Jacob Schiff's approach. Morgan, too, was an organizer who dealt not only with the financial but also with the *physical* properties of industries, and who saw to it—by direct management and through the men he put on their boards—that they were *run*, once he had an interest in them, exactly as he wanted them to be. Soon after Joseph Seligman's death, Jacob Schiff was the only German Jewish banker whom Morgan—at least occasionally, and always begrudgingly—treated as a peer.

Schiff had studied the Union Pacific Railroad and its problems for four years before embarking on a project which everyone else in Wall Street considered hopeless. The Union Pacific, having joined the Central Pacific with Leland Stanford's golden spike, had been having trouble ever since. An early engraving shows the crew of the little line shooting their way across the plain against a herd of belligerent buffaloes. Soon the Union Pacific's human adversaries were even more ferocious, and the *coup de grâce* was delivered by the Seligmans' old client, Jay Gould. By the time Schiff became interested in the line, Gould had bled it dry and abandoned it,

and the company had collapsed into bankruptcy. Among the larger of the Union Pacific's debts were \$45 million owed to the United States Government, plus 6 percent interest on government bond loans which it had used as collateral to raise another million from the public. Unpaid interest had accumulated for thirty years. The line's mileage had been reduced from 8,167 to 4,469, and its subsidiary companies were in a desperate tangle of debts. There was nothing left to show for the line but what Morgan, who had repeatedly refused to help bail it out, referred to as "two streaks of rust across the plains."

It was a bad moment for railroads. Two other lines, the Santa Fe and the Northern Pacific, had collapsed within a year of each other. J. P. Morgan, meanwhile, had become the one-man ruler of American finance. All other bankers, in endeavors of any size, had to defer to him. But Morgan was actually relieved when Jacob Schiff came to see him and asked, deferentially, whether Morgan would have "any objection" if Kuhn, Loeb "had a try" at reorganizing the Union Pacific. Morgan replied cheerfully, "Go ahead!" He said that he was "through with the Union Pacific," and added, "I don't even want a financial participation." This, as it turned out, was the greatest tactical error of Morgan's career.

For several months Schiff and Kuhn, Loeb busied themselves with the task of buying up Union Pacific bonds. But Schiff began to encounter a curious and invisible wall of opposition to his plans. There were strange and unexplained delays in Congress. For no reason Schiff could fathom, a portion of the press suddenly became hostile to him. European bondholders, on various mysterious pretexts, held off from signing definite agreements. As Schiff considered the situation, he decided that there was only one financial power in America strong enough to provide this subtle kind of antagonism. He returned to Mr. Morgan's office and, with a little smile, asked whether Morgan had changed his mind. Morgan said, "I give you my word. I am not responsible. But I will find out who is." A few days later, Morgan sent for Schiff and reported, "It is that little two-bit broker, Harriman, who is interfering. Watch out for him. He's a sharper."

"Ned" Harriman was more than that. He was one of the most disagreeable men of his period, and one of the most disliked. He was small and skinny and stooped, with watery eyes behind thick-lensed glasses. He had a prison pallor, a frightful cough, foul breath, and a nose that dripped.

He was perennially ailing of one disease or another, and he spoke in a voice so low that it was rarely audible. When it could be heard, it had nothing pleasant to say. Harriman was incapable of tact. He never smiled. James Stillman of the National City Bank had called him “not a safe man to do business with.” Yet Harriman’s relatively small railroad line, the Illinois Central, was one of the best-run and most profitable in the country.

Up to that point, E. H. Harriman had been regarded primarily as a nuisance on Wall Street. He owned a small second mortgage on a few Erie Railroad bonds, and had once had the audacity to telephone the Erie’s executive offices demanding that the Chicago express make a special stop at Goshen, New York, so that he could attend the races there. The request was curtly refused. Harriman, however, who knew that the express would be flagged at Goshen if passengers were boarding there for Buffalo or points west, telephoned a minion and had him buy a ticket from Goshen to Chicago. Harriman boarded the crack train at Jersey City, and when the train ground to a halt at Goshen, trainmen were surprised to find no Goshen-to-Chicago passenger but, instead, a debarking Ned Harriman. For exploits like these, he was distrusted and resented.

When Jacob Schiff first went to see Harriman, his approach was tactful. “We’re having trouble reorganizing the Union Pacific, Mr. Harriman,” Schiff said. “We seem to be meeting opposition. We wonder—is this opposition coming from you?”

“I’m your man,” said Harriman.

“Why?” asked Schiff.

“Because I plan to reorganize the Union Pacific myself,” said Harriman. “I want it for my Illinois Central.”

“How do you plan to get it?” Schiff asked.

Harriman replied, “With my Illinois Central, I can borrow money more cheaply than you can.”

The temerity of the strange little man impressed Schiff, who then said, “Perhaps we can work together.”

“Perhaps,” Harriman is said to have replied. “If I can be chairman of the executive committee.”

Schiff flatly refused and departed. The opposition to his plans grew even stronger. Soon he appeared before Harriman again. “Suppose,” Jacob Schiff

said, “we put you on the executive committee of the line. Then, if it turns out you’re the strongest man, you’ll be the chairman in the end.”

“Fine,” said Harriman. “I’m with you. And of course I will be the strongest man.”

Schiff’s joining forces with Harriman was the beginning of a collaboration that would last for more than twenty years, during which the two men were in almost daily contact, which would lead to the amassing of the greatest single railroad fortune in the world—and which would lead the great J. P. Morgan, who referred to Harriman with such epithets as “punk” and “pad-shover,” and who often called Jacob Schiff “that foreigner,” to acknowledge both men as “my dear friends.”

Harriman’s Illinois Central did indeed provide a quick source of credit, but for a project as big as reviving the Union Pacific, Schiff saw immediately that foreign capital would be needed. He turned to a man who had been one of his boyhood friends in Germany, and who was now a London financier very nearly on a par with the Rothschilds, Sir Ernest Cassel.

Cassel was an unlikely sort of man for Schiff to have as a friend. He had become an elegant and an epicure, though his background was similar to Schiff’s. Cassel was also, like August Belmont, a complete apostate of his faith. Schiff could be quite tiresome on the subject of religious observances. Schiff despised Belmont, whom he once called “an oyster, without a shell.” Yet the very Belmont-like Sir Ernest became Schiff’s chief financial contact in London and, as the years went by, his personal arbiter of taste in clothes, painting, furniture, and even table linen and silverware. Apparently the two never discussed religion.

If Joseph Seligman had virtually invented international banking in America, it was Jacob Schiff who took the invention, refined it, and made it an art, and his alliance with Sir Ernest Cassel is another example of Jacob’s more up-to-date, streamlined approach. Joseph Seligman had devised a Rothschildesque, one-for-all, all-for-one, family-business setup, with a brother stationed in each important European capital. It had worked well enough for the Seligmans, particularly in the days before the radiotelegraph and the Atlantic cable, when blood ties across the sea with men you could trust were essential. By Jacob Schiff’s time, however, this had become an

old-fashioned, countrified system. In this faster, more competitive age, it was too rigid, too inflexible.

By moving as a unit, the Seligman family complex moved slowly and awkwardly. It was forever having to stop what it was doing to assist some brother who had made an expensive error, or to buy out a brother-in-law, or to help William in Paris buy his wife a diamond necklace. After Joseph's death, the Seligmans belatedly realized this. In 1897 the remaining brothers drafted a "Family Liquidation Agreement," not an agreement to liquidate the family but a plan to separate the New York, Paris, London, and Frankfurt firms from one another, and to divide their assets among the managing partners. The amount involved was \$7,831,175.64, and it was portioned out in varying amounts with the largest share—\$1,375,444.47—going to Isaac in London. But apparently nostalgia for the old, more familiar way of doing business quickly set in. The brothers had no sooner separated their assets than they began buying back in on one another—William, Leopold, Henry, and Isaac each buying a 10.4 percent interest in the New York house (for \$800,000 each), and the New York house purchasing an interest in all three European houses. The Seligmans continued in their tight-knit way, causing Jacob Schiff to smile and say that, "The Seligmans have never really left their little family-village business in Bavaria."

Schiff distrusted such "standing alliances." He liked to be able to select alliances to suit the occasion. Jacob had brothers, too. (His brother Herman had gone to London and into banking, while the youngest Schiff boy, Ludwig, had remained in Frankfurt as a stockbroker.) But Jacob preferred informal contacts with correspondents and business friends, and this system enabled him to move unencumbered through the complicated reaches of international finance. "He was a man," said one associate, "who moved fast because he always traveled light."

He always carried his valuables with him, however. For instance, Sir Ernest had access to the highest levels of British financial and political power. He often lunched with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he even had the ear of the Throne. Now that Cassel shared Schiff's, and Harriman's interest in the Union Pacific reorganization, bankers' ears pricked up on both sides of the Atlantic. Within three days of the news of Cassel's participation, Schiff and Harriman had received \$40 million worth of

pledges, and suddenly the project which had seemed “ridiculous” to Wall Street seemed distinctly less so.

Though Schiff knew a great deal about railroads, he discovered that Harriman was a railroading genius. After getting him his financing, he gave Harriman his head. The Schiff-Harriman group bought the Union Pacific on November 2, 1897, and Harriman was elected to the line’s board of directors in December.

He then began a long struggle with his other board members for permission to spend \$25 million for rolling stock, track, and improvements. It was an unheard-of sum at the time, and, once more, Wall Street soured on Harriman and called him a fool. But Schiff and Cassel backed him, and at last he prevailed. While a doubting Wall Street watched, the fortunes of the Union Pacific began to change. Schiff soon granted Harriman the chairmanship he wanted, but, as a good banker should, Schiff retained a position close behind the driver’s seat. Presently the line had risen out of debt, and was even showing a profit.

But throughout the whole Union Pacific reorganization there was one question that puzzled certain observers. As Harriman, the ex-office boy and son of a poor Episcopal clergyman, was becoming one of the dominant figures in American railroads, his only rival of any importance in the field was the little Minnesotan, James J. Hill. While Harriman had been building up the Union Pacific, Hill, backed by Morgan, had been busily buying up the competing Northern Pacific. How long, people wondered, could both Hill and Harriman remain friends of Jacob Schiff?

MR. SCHIFF VS. MR. LOEB

If Jacob Schiff liked loose and informal business relationships which could be severed quickly and picked up again as he saw fit, he was correspondingly rigid and unyielding in his home. As Cyrus Adler, in his biography of Schiff, wrote, “He was accessible to all people on all subjects, though not easily persuaded when his mind was fixed.”*

As a husband and father, he often seemed heartless. Those nearest to him, including his wife, had trouble feeling close to him. Therese Loeb Schiff was accustomed to discipline (from Betty) and to daintiness (her father’s toy child, she could not even arrange a bowl of flowers without a servant’s help). But she had also been brought up to believe that her father was the final authority on any question that dealt with money. It was a little while before she fully understood the battle that was taking place in the office downtown. When her husband came home at night, he sometimes told her of developments, involving long lists of railroads whose names she never could keep straight, and plans. And sometimes she would interrupt him to ask, in her soft voice, “Well, what does my father think of it?” The question always seemed to make him angry, and so she learned to stop asking, and to listen to his evening discourse in respectful, if bewildered, silence.

There was almost nothing that Solomon Loeb and Jacob Schiff agreed upon. They did not agree on religion. Solomon was a professed agnostic, and there had been no religious observances at all in the Loeb house on Thirty-eighth Street. All this began to change when Jacob entered the family. He was the most “orthodox” of all the young German Jews of his generation, but with this he mixed a ritualistic liberalism which he had concocted for himself. He disapproved of the Loeb’s amorphous attitudes. He lectured his father-in-law on his shortcomings as a Jew, and, though

Solomon grumbled, Betty Loeb urged her husband to unbend a little for the sake of peace in the family. The nonreligious Loeb household became outwardly very pious.

Nor did Schiff and Loeb see eye to eye on spas, a serious matter for gentlemen of the era, and the arguments about which cure performed the greater service to the liver occasionally became heated. Mr. Loeb preferred the waters at Carlsbad. Schiff preferred Marienbad or Gastein—both, in those days, considered “grander” than Carlsbad. Whenever he mentioned Marienbad or Gastein, he enjoyed turning to his father-in-law to say, “I suppose you’ll be at Carlsbad again—with the bourgeoisie.” Both Solomon and Betty Loeb fretted privately over what seemed to them their son-in-law’s—and now their daughter’s—expanding taste for grandeur. (Once, after one of the young Schiffs’ trips to Europe, which had included a sojourn at Marienbad, Betty Loeb asked Therese if she had bought anything in Paris. Therese replied, “*Nur ein einfaches schwarzes SamtKleid*”—“Only a simple black velvet dress”—and Betty Loeb was aghast at the thought that her daughter had become so elegant as to use the adjective “simple” in connection with a fabric as rich as velvet.)

But it was in the Kuhn, Loeb offices that the two men’s differences were most pronounced. It was a battle of banking philosophies, and of generations. Solomon was cautious. Jacob was bold. Solomon was older and contented with his firm’s success. Jacob was young and wanted to bend the firm to his will. Jacob made it a point to get to the office earlier than his father-in-law. There he started each day writing dozens of memoranda in small, meticulous longhand—plans, proposals, suggestions, ideas—and when Solomon Loeb arrived, he found his desk strewn with these notes. Some of Jacob’s notions were too intricate for Solomon to grasp, and he would have Jacob sent in, and the two would try to discuss Jacob’s ideas—Solomon reminding Jacob of the philosophy (“Always say no . . .”) that had made him successful. When they emerged from their meetings, Jacob Schiff looked angry and Solomon Loeb looked tired.

Like so many self-made men, Solomon Loeb had prided himself on knowing, at any given time, just what was going on in every corner of his company. After all, he and his first partners had been retailers. As bankers, they had preferred to finance manufacturers and merchants whose operations they understood. Now the firm’s railroad operations had

extended Solomon's empire beyond his reach. As he studied the firm's figures he found it increasingly necessary to call for Jacob to explain. And Solomon had begun to worry about his health. After a day at the office, he would lie on a velvet sofa with his head in Betty's ample lap while she bathed his forehead with a handkerchief dipped in cologne. One morning Solomon called for Jacob. The clerk, as usual, hurried to Jacob's office to say, "Mr. Loeb would like to see you." But this time, without looking up, Jacob Schiff said, "Tell Mr. Loeb he may see me in my office."

The year was 1881. The Age of Seligman was over. While uptown Jewish society in New York might continue to argue about Jews of "the Seligman type" as opposed to those of "the Nathan type," there was no doubt among financiers in Wall Street that there was a basic difference between the Seligman and the Schiff types. American finance had entered the great Age of Schiff. Today, as a result, when the Kuhn, Loeb partners gather for a formal photograph, they do not assemble in front of the portraits of Abraham Kuhn, who looks wistful, or Solomon Loeb, who looks dismayed, but in front of the huge, mantel-crowning portrait of Jacob H. Schiff, who looks regal.

Early in the 1880's, scarcely ten years after Jacob Schiff became a partner in his firm, Solomon Loeb began to do what many in his family still call "a noble thing." Like all noble things, it was not an easy thing. But it had the blessing of Betty, who had helped him guide the fortune of Kuhn, Loeb from the beginning. He began to draw a distinction between "projects" and "policy." He would remain interested, he said, in Kuhn, Loeb projects. But policy would become the bailiwick of his son-in-law, Jacob Schiff. In effect, Solomon Loeb had abdicated. Though he continued to come to the office each day, he took the position of a silent partner. Jacob was given what he had always wanted—the reins of a company, a bank of his own.

One of the first things he did was to move its offices to larger and grander quarters, across the street in the new Mutual Life Insurance Building at 30 Nassau Street.

*This is as close as Dr. Adler lets himself come to an adverse comment on Schiff's character. Otherwise, his book is all praise, and one can see why.

Schiff paid him to write it, and, when Schiff died, one of the items in his estate was six dollars in royalties on the book.

PORTRAIT OF A FATHER

Therese Loeb Schiff tried to adjust herself to her husband's new leadership of the Loeb family. She tried to adjust herself also to her husband's piety. In their house on Fifty-third Street, Jacob paced daily through the rooms, prayer book in hand, reciting his prayers. Once, during this ritual, Therese noticed that he had placed, against the open pages of the prayer book, the daily stock market report. She made the mistake of chiding him about this. He was not amused. Jacob Schiff was not easily amused at anything. Therese learned never to approach her husband in a spirit of levity. She began spending her afternoons with Betty Loeb in the house on Thirty-eighth Street. When Jacob appeared at the end of the day and asked her, "Well, what did you do today?" Therese would reply shyly, "I went home."

Jacob's and Therese's first child, a girl whom they named Frieda, was born prematurely, scarcely eight months after they were married. This was an embarrassment to Jacob, and he blamed Therese for the untimely birth. Shortly after, Jacob stopped by the Loeb's house for a duty visit with his in-laws. While there, a friend of the Loeb's, attempting to make a joke—though he should have known better—said to Jacob, slyly, "I want to congratulate you on the appropriate name you've given your baby—*Früh-da*" ("early arrival" in German). Furious, Jacob strode out of the house and back to his own, where he demanded that Therese change the baby's name to something else. Therese wept. She loved the name, had selected it herself, and the initial "F" was in memory of her real mother, Fanny Kuhn Loeb. Jacob finally let her have her way, but he never spoke to the Loeb's friend again.

Their second child, a boy born a year after Frieda, whom Jacob and Therese named Mortimer, was even more of a problem to Jacob, though

none of the family was ever sure why. Nothing young Morti did seemed to please his father. Jacob Schiff was of the old school when it came to punishments, and Morti was spanked for the slightest infraction of a rule. Spanking-Morti sessions became so commonplace in the Schiff household that the family began delicately referring to them as “seances.” The ladies in the drawing room always tried to talk up more brightly and animatedly whenever they heard Morti’s muffled screams from the seance upstairs. Early in life, Morti developed the tactic of befriending the servants, who sneaked trays of food up to the nursery to him, to replace the meals he had been ordered to bed without. The servants became Morti’s way of finding “home.”

Jacob Schiff disliked the house at 57 East Fifty-third Street which his father-in-law had given him as a wedding present. He may have been justified, because certain of the Loeb’s—though not Solomon—seemed to treat the house in an annoyingly proprietary way. In the sitting room, for instance, there hung a tall mirror between two long, damask-draped windows, and from the time that she was able to walk baby Frieda loved to pose and pirouette before her reflection in the glass. Solomon’s son, Frieda’s Uncle Morris, announced that such vanity was unbecoming in a woman, even though the woman was still a toddler, and one day Morris Loeb appeared in his brother-in-law’s house and completely covered the mirror with sheets of newspaper.

Jacob sold the Fifty-third Street house and bought another, larger house on West Fifty-seventh Street, which the family lived in only briefly. A neighbor built a wing which cut off Jacob’s light, and he sold the Fifty-seventh Street house to Abraham Wolff, a Kuhn, Loeb partner who evidently didn’t mind the gloom. Jacob then advised Therese that he had bought a lot at the corner of Seventy-third Street and Riverside Drive, where he intended to build.

At the news of this plan, Therese sat down and cried. Tears were her only defense against her husband. Poor shy Therese had very few friends—all first-generation Americans, all German Jewish, all wives of men in the little “banking crowd.” The women’s outlook was European and middle-class, their manners stiff and studiously correct; they conversed in German, calling each other “*Frau*,” and never used first names. They paid calls and had teas; each woman had her regular day at home. (Therese Schiff’s had become

Tuesday.) They discussed their steamer crossings and their servants, and whether their deliveries had been “hard” or “easy.” It was provincial and inbred, but too formal and self-conscious to be really intimate, yet these were Therese’s friends. They lived in the East Forties to the Seventies, between Park Avenue and Fifth, and saw each other daily on their ritual rounds of shopping, visiting, and card-leaving. To Therese, being sent west to the edge of the Hudson meant that she would never see her friends again. If they visited her, they would have to come by carriage, and Therese was sure that none of them would bother. Besides, how far away it was from “home”!

Jacob relented and sold the Riverside lot, which later became the site of the Schwab mansion. He had eyed Fifth Avenue before, unquestionably the best address in New York for men of stature. In 1880, while the rest of the crowd mourned the death of Joe Seligman, Jacob Schiff decided to make the great social leap, to 932 Fifth Avenue at Seventy-fourth Street.

A move the size of this one clearly indicated some sort of celebration, and Jacob went busily to work planning an elaborate housewarming party. It must be given, he said, “At once!”—as soon as 932 was finished. Jacob was Belmontian in his approach to entertaining. He planned the menu, picked the guests, chose the wines, selected the flowers, and diagrammed the dinner table for the placement of cards. Therese, quite unsure of herself socially, was happy to let him, and was even grateful when a gown from Worth’s arrived that he had picked out for her to wear. All New York’s German Jewish elite were invited with notes that Jacob dictated to Therese.

Then tragedy struck. On the day the Schiffs moved to their new house, little Morti—displeasing his father again—came down with whooping cough. A large and thoroughly undignified sign was nailed to the front door of 932 Fifth Avenue. It read: “CONTAGION. KEEP OUT.” The party was canceled.

Frieda Schiff later wrote that 932 was “a house full of horrors,” heavily damasked, heavily marbled, even more cluttered with late Victorian furniture and *objets d’art* than the Solomon Loeb’s, whose decor Jacob seemed quite consciously to be trying to outdo and bring to its knees. Sir Ernest Cassel had not yet become Jacob Schiff’s decorating mentor. Jacob had started collecting paintings, but he was not yet an experienced collector. Frieda wrote: “Father used to cough or give signals at the wrong time”

when he went to auctions, and ended up with a great many things he hadn't planned to buy. He was required to find house room, for instance, for two enormous Chinese vases he hadn't wanted; they went into the dining room. (In the dark bowels of these urns, little Frieda and Morti sometimes hid from their father.) There was also a bronze bas-relief of the Schiff children by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, memorable to Frieda and Morti chiefly because they had to pose for it through an entire Christmas holiday.

At 932 Fifth Avenue the Schiff family life congealed into an unvarying pattern. The day began with the master of the house being helped into his overcoat by Joseph, the Schiff major-domo. "Do I need an umbrella today, Joseph?" Mr. Schiff would inquire. If Joseph replied, "Yes, I think so, sir," Jacob would answer, "Then I shan't take one." It was a rule of Jacob's: Joseph was invariably wrong about the weather. (Joseph, meanwhile, dabbled in the stock market quite successfully, and used to point out that he never took Mr. Schiff's advice, either; he liked to remind the Schiff children that he was rich enough to employ his own butler—and might, if he wasn't treated properly.)

While the exchange with Joseph was going on, the children were ushered by nurses into the front hall to say good-bye to their father. Jacob then inspected them, paying particular attention to the cleanliness of noses and fingernails, and, if satisfied, presented his bearded cheek to be kissed. Nurses then pressed a clean white hanky into the hand of each child. From the front door, waving their handkerchiefs and crying, "Good-bye, Pa! Good-bye, Pa!" the children watched Jacob Schiff descend the brownstone steps. A believer in walking, Jacob often walked as far downtown as Fourteenth Street before taking a cab.

When his children were old enough for school, he insisted that they walk. He disapproved of Mayer Lehman, who drove his children to school in a carriage. Father and children departed the Schiff house together. From Seventy-fourth and Fifth they proceeded to Fifty-ninth and Sixth, where Morti was deposited at Dr. Sachs's. Then Frieda and her father continued on to Forty-fourth Street, where Brearley was. It was a mile-and-a-half walk for Frieda. After school the children were met by their French governess, who escorted them on the long walk home. The children were required to converse in French all the way. There followed lunch with the governess, and then "afternoon lessons," which were private. There was riding in the

park on Mondays and Thursdays, piano Tuesdays and Fridays, Bible on Wednesdays. Every morning from 7:30 to 8:00, behind the closed shutters of the music room, the children practiced their piano. Because her father thought she was overweight, fencing lessons were prescribed for Frieda. But, because he thought the dashing Spanish fencing instructor had a “devilish gleam” in his eye, Mr. Schiff directed that the French governess sit in on the class. (It was the governess who noticed the gleam and suggested this arrangement, and the fencing master’s eye may have been on her and not little Frieda; the governess and the Spaniard were often seen in animated conversation, and were once discovered stretched out on the downstairs bowling alley where they explained they had “tripped and fallen.”)

Dinner at 932 was at 6:30 sharp. Anyone arriving at table later than that missed his meal. Jacob insisted that his bowling alley be used. After dinner he asked, “Now, who will bowl with me?” Both children hated bowling, and this question was invariably met with silence. Jacob would then rise and, with a tap on the shoulder, select his bowling companion, and the two would descend to the alley. (The companion, of course, had the job of setting up the pins.)

Fridays were family nights. The Seligmans were in possession of Saturdays, and Sundays belonged to the Loebes. Once, when invited to a Friday night function elsewhere, Jacob replied, “I have made it a rule to spend Friday evening exclusively with my family, and I can under no circumstances vary from this.”

Jacob Schiff’s personality seemed to add a new rigidity to New York’s German Jewish social life. On Friday evenings the family gathered in the drawing room in a circle where the patriarch blessed them each. Then he read a short service in German, after which the group descended quietly to dinner. At table Jacob Schiff pronounced a grace which he liked to say he had composed himself, though actually it was a pastiche of Talmudic blessings:

Our God and Father,
Thou givest food to every living being.
Thou has not only given us life,
Thou also givest our daily bread to sustain it.

Continue to bless us with Thy mercy
So that we may be able to share our own plenty
With those less fortunate than ourselves,
Blessed be Thy name forevermore. Amen.

He always stressed “With those less fortunate than ourselves.”

E. H. Harriman was an antisocial man who never accepted invitations to dine, but James J. Hill was just the opposite, and was a frequent dinner guest at 932 Fifth Avenue. Hill was never given the nod by polite society, but Jacob Schiff admired him for the way, after the Panic of 1873, he had pulled a railroad out of a \$27-million hole. Hill liked to talk, and when he started he was hard to stop. Ten o'clock was Jacob Schiff's bedtime, and at ten Joseph would bring his master his orange juice on a silver tray and say discreetly, “Mr. Hill, your taxi is waiting.” “Send it away!” Hill would say airily, and launch into another anecdote while Jacob Schiff sat looking pained and discomfited.

Hill's breezy manner displeased Jacob on other occasions. Hill habitually carried with him a small bag of uncut stones which he played with nervously as he talked, like a Middle Easterner's worry-beads. One evening Therese Schiff admired one of the stones which she thought particularly pretty, and Hill gave it to her. She approached her husband and, in her small, soft voice, said, “Look what Mr. Hill gave me.” Jacob looked at it and said, “Only I give jewels to my wife. Give it back.” She did as he told her.

Everybody did. “Though small in size,” said one of the family, “his presence always seemed to fill the largest doorway when he appeared. You only had to look once into those blue eyes to know he was someone to be reckoned with.”

Schiff would have very much appreciated having Hill as a banking client. But Hill remained steadfast in his loyalty to Morgan, even though Schiff enjoyed reminding Hill, over their cigars, “I am very nearly as big as he,” and once said, “Morgan may not be as big as he thinks he is.” Certainly Schiff's alliance with E. H. Harriman was making him rich. In just three years since the reorganization of the Union Pacific, the line had become one of the greatest successes of the age. It had paid back all its debts, with interest, had unencumbered assets of \$210 million within its system, and no

less than two *billion* dollars' worth of outside investments which Schiff had helped place. Morgan at this point clearly regretted having relinquished his interest in the tracks he had called "two streaks of rust."

Those tracks were permitting Jacob Schiff to be one of the first in the German Jewish crowd to maintain not one but two summer homes—at Sea Bright, on the Jersey shore, and in Bar Harbor, Maine. (For all his devoutly religious views, Jacob always liked to step boldly into gentile areas where other Jews chose not to tread.) There was an unvarying schedule for opening and closing these houses. June and July were spent at Sea Bright. Then, on the last Thursday of July, the family had an early supper and boarded their private car—usually one of E. H. Harriman's cars of the Union Pacific—parents, children, nurses, governess, maids, and at least sixty pieces of luggage, many of them trunks. The car was presided over by Madison, the Schiffs' chef, and a helper. Sometimes a second private car was needed. The family would travel overnight to Ellsworth, Maine, then disembark and board a boat to Bar Harbor. The horses, meanwhile, were traveling, along with grooms, tack, and equipment, by boat from New Jersey. Once in Bar Harbor, everyone rested, and no wonder.

They stayed in Bar Harbor exactly a month. Then, in September, the whole process reversed itself, and everyone went back to Sea Bright again for another month. In October it was back to the city for the winter. If this schedule sounds arduous, it is well to remember that this was before regular visits to Florida were added to the Schiffs' yearly itinerary. Alternate summers, of course, were spent in Europe. If the first generation of Seligmans had taught the crowd how to do it, Schiff as the leader of his generation was teaching them how to do it better.

Considering the hugeness of the scale on which Jacob Schiff lived, while financing E. H. Harriman's railroads was making him steadily richer, it was strange that during these years his penuriousness was becoming more pronounced. He was miserly about the use of the telephone in his house and kept a little notebook on the stand beside it where each person was required to enter calls. "Telephone calls cost money!" he kept reminding them, and at the end of each month he carefully compared the calls in the notebook with those on the bill.

He was financial adviser to, and on the board of, the Western Union Company, and this gave him a franking privilege allowing him to send

wires free. Naturally he preferred sending telegrams to telephoning. Each evening, during their summer months at Sea Bright, the two children were expected to dress up—with white cotton gloves and sailor hats secured by elastics under the chin—to meet their august parent when he arrived on the ferry *Asbury Park*. If, however, Schiff changed his mind and decided to take the train, he would send a telegram. These wires always arrived long after the family had departed for the ferry dock, and Schiff would be left waiting, unmet, at the station—furious.

Frieda and Morti were given their first spending allowances as children during one of their biennial summers in Germany. They were allowed fifty pfennig a week. When they returned to New York that fall, their father explained that this was computed at twelve and a half cents in U.S. currency, and that the children would therefore have to keep track of which was the twelve-cent week and which was the thirteen-cent week. At the end of the month he went over their accounts looking for discrepancies. (By the time she was engaged to be married, Frieda's allowance had been gradually increased until she was receiving a dollar a week, out of which her father required that she set one-tenth aside for the Fresh Air Fund.)

Mr. Schiff was a great maker of conditions. It was his tactic in both business and human relations: he seldom offered anything outright. There was always some sort of proviso attached. Sometimes his conditions were too stiff to be acceptable. But at other times they revealed an odd sort of logic. There was, for instance, the strange case of young Morti Schiff's long struggle to receive the kind of education he wanted.

Morti was an excellent scholar. He was first in his class at Dr. Sachs's school nearly all the time, but this did not delight his father. What Jacob Schiff considered most important was that Morti receive a grade of "excellent" in that marking category called "deportment." Like any boy, Morti did not always deport himself to perfection, and, regardless of his other grades, whenever his little gray report book showed a lapse in this respect, Morti and his father had another "seance" in the bathroom at 932 Fifth. After the spanking, Jacob Schiff would declare, "My son doesn't have to lead in his studies. But that *my son* shouldn't know how to behave—that's unpardonable!"

Morti finished school with honors when he was barely sixteen, but his father maintained that he was "not ready" for college. There then began a

curious correspondence with the Reverend Doctor Endicott Peabody, headmaster of Groton. He would very much like, Jacob Schiff wrote Peabody, to enroll his son at the school for one year—but on one condition. He pointed out that Morti had been brought up “a conscious Jew,” and therefore would have to be excused from all religious and chapel activities. There followed what the family described as “an exchange of dignified and amiable letters,” which ended up with “mutual agreement” that Groton was not the school for Morti.

Now, why Jacob Schiff would even for a moment have suspected that Groton *might* have been the school for Morti is, at first glance, unfathomable. The year was 1893, and Groton was only ten years old. It had been founded by Peabody on the theory that the traditions and tenets of the Episcopal Church, combined with those of the English public school, would be most likely to produce ideal “Christian gentlemen” in the United States. The words “Christian,” “Protestant Episcopal,” and “Church of England” reappeared dozens of times throughout the school’s prospectus; its first board of trustees included two bishops of the state of Massachusetts and a distinguished assortment of other gentile Easterners, including J. Pierpont Morgan. Schiff must have known these things.

It had been sixteen years before, in the summer of 1877 (the very month, coincidentally, of Morti’s birth), when the episode of Joseph Seligman at the Grand Union had created such a storm in the press and among the clergy. Did Schiff have a notion of making a test case of his own over prep school admission policies? Schiff definitely felt that he had inherited Joseph Seligman’s mantle as New York’s leading Jew. If a test case was to be made, who better than Schiff to make it?

At the height of the Seligman-Hilton affair, there were unpleasant hints that wishes for business revenge were as much behind the affair as anti-Semitism. In the Schiff-Peabody exchange Wall Street rivalries may also have been involved. Peabody had close connections on the Street; he had worked in Wall Street himself for a while, and his father had been a partner in Morgan’s London office. Morgan himself was a cornerstone of the school. Jacob Schiff may have thought that Kuhn, Loeb could gain if its gentile rival—Morgan—could be discredited and embarrassed over an issue such as Groton.

Perhaps, if Schiff did briefly consider creating a Seligman-like affair, he remembered that the Seligman affair had ended in a thoroughly undignified and unamiable way. Schiff cared a great deal about deportment. Or perhaps he was not quite ready to do battle with the great Morgan.

Morti had never wanted to go to Groton; all he wanted to do was to go to Harvard. And so, to Morti's distress, as soon as his father abandoned the Groton idea, he announced that he wanted Morti to go to Amherst.

Schiff's opposition to Harvard is even harder to fathom than his flirtation with Groton. Harvard had already become something of a tradition in the family (Solomon Loeb's boys had gone there). Charles W. Eliot, Harvard's president, was a close personal friend of Schiff's, who admired Eliot enormously, quoted him endlessly (the heavily accented Schiff was fond of saying, "As President Eliot said to me in that peculiar New England accent of his ..."), and the two men were frequent summer hiking companions in the hills around Bar Harbor. Yet he was adamant. Harvard, he said, was "too large," and "too many wealthy boys" attended it, both of which assertions showed a strange lack of understanding of what Harvard really offered in those days. Desperately, Morti wrote to President Eliot and asked him to intercede with his father, and Eliot tactfully mentioned to Jacob that he hoped Morti would "give a thought to Harvard." Huffily, Jacob replied that it was out of the question.

Jacob said that Morti was showing signs of being "too extravagant," and that Harvard would make Morti *more* extravagant. But Morti protested against Amherst so strongly that his father relented—part way. He offered a condition. If Morti would spend a year at Amherst, and could prove while there that he was not being extravagant, he could transfer to Harvard the following year. Morti agreed, and set off for Amherst where he installed himself in a boardinghouse for \$3.50 a week; even students on full scholarships had better accommodations than his. The boardinghouse was a fair distance from the campus, and Morti wrote to his father asking if he could buy a bicycle. Jacob said yes, and Morti bought himself a shiny two-wheeler.

When Morti came home in June, he reminded his father of his promise: next year could be spent at Harvard. But Jacob shook his head sadly, and said, "No, my son—you proved just what I feared. You were extravagant at Amherst." Almost in tears, Morti demanded to know *how* he had been

extravagant. “You bought a new bicycle,” Jacob said. “You could have bought a secondhand one.”

“You didn’t *say* it had to be secondhand!” said Morti.

“I thought you understood,” said his father.

In the fall Morti went back to Amherst. He was taken into a Greek-letter fraternity where the boys were trying to raise money for a billiard table. Morti wrote his father, asking if he could make a contribution. Jacob Schiff wrote back in an unusually expansive mood, saying that he would be happy to pay for the entire table—and a billiard table of the very finest make—if, in return, the boys would agree never to play billiards for money. The boys would make no such agreement, they never got their table, and Morti’s popularity in the fraternity was somewhat lessened. This sort of thing went on all the time.

When Morti came home for the Christmas holidays that year, he came down with scarlet fever and so had to miss most of the balance of his sophomore year at Amherst. Even so, in June he made one final request. Could he spend his *junior* year at Harvard? “It was then,” wrote Morti’s sister Frieda, “that my father decided that Morti was ready for business.”

Schiff asked his friend Hill to send Morti out to Duluth to work on the road gang of the Great Northern Railroad, to learn railroad “from the bottom”—a fitting occupation for a bright young scholar with tendencies toward extravagance. Morti did this for a while. When his father decided Morti had learned enough railroading, Morti was sent to Europe to learn banking from the same level. He began working as an apprentice in various banking houses Jacob Schiff selected—first for the firm of Samuel Montagu in London (where Sir Ernest Cassel kindly took Morti under his wing) and then to M. M. Warburg & Company in Hamburg—moving further and further away from Cambridge, Massachusetts. When Morti spent his twenty-first birthday in Hamburg with the Warburgs, he realized that he would never get to Harvard.

Periodically, Jacob Schiff traveled to Europe to check on Morti’s progress. Once, at a London party, Jacob encountered his son, who was color-blind like his Grandfather Loeb, wearing a lavender-gray suit and a yellow-gray topcoat. In front of two hundred assembled guests, Jacob Schiff told Morti to march right home and change his clothes and not to come back until he was properly attired. Of course Morti did as he was told.

Through all this Morti Schiff seems to have maintained an almost superhuman cheerfulness. Why did he put up with so much? “Morti,” said his sister Frieda, whose experiences with her father were sometimes even more bewildering, “was passionately devoted to our father.”

THE MITTELWEG WARBURGS

Frieda Schiff, like her brother Morti, wanted to please her father. It wasn't always easy, for one of Jacob Schiff's specialties was demonstrating the shortcomings of others.

One of his philanthropies was the Young Men's Hebrew Association (Schiff had presented the Y.M.H.A. with its first permanent home at 861 Lexington Avenue, complete with gymnasium, library, clubrooms and classrooms), and this had led to his interest in its feminine counterpart, the Y.W.H.A. When plans were being drawn up for a building, Jacob promised a gift of \$25,000 on the condition—again—that \$200,000 more be contributed by others by January of the following year. The job of raising this extra sum was given to Frieda as a project, her first fund-raising experience of any importance. She went at it with diligence, but by the first of December she had contacted everyone she knew and she was still \$18,000 short of her goal.

She knew that her father was a man of his word, and she was, understandably, "in a terrible state." She could envision the entire Y.W.H.A. project collapsing because the condition could not be met. To make her state even more terrible, her father went out of his way to remind her of his condition in mid-December. "You know," he told her, "I have it in writing that I shall not give the \$25,000 unless the fund is completed." After days on the telephone she began to have sleepless nights.

"On January first," she wrote, "I was on the verge of despair"—still \$18,000 short. Then she received a letter from her father. It was not addressed to her as a daughter, or even as a woman. It was addressed simply to "Chairman of Y.W.H.A. Building Committee." Writing to her as if she were a stranger, Jacob Schiff advised the Chairman that he had "persuaded

Mrs. Schiff to give \$18,000 in memory of her brother.” The check was enclosed.

“It was absolutely typical of him,” Frieda wrote later, “a man of his word, but his heart got around his word, and made it all legal.” He was actually ashamed of letting his heart show. Doing it his way, he had provided just a peek of the heart without, as the English say, “letting down the side,” or, as the Germans say, becoming “unbuttoned.”

Not all episodes had such happy endings for Frieda. In 1894 she was having a particularly trying year. Her father had insisted that she could not make her debut until she was eighteen, and, since her birthday was in February, this meant she would miss the entire winter debutante season. Her best friend, Addie Wolff (the daughter of Abraham Wolff, another Kuhn, Loeb partner), was having her party at Sherry’s, but Jacob Schiff would not let Frieda go. He said, “If you are seen in one place, you’ll have more invitations. We’ll have the same scene each time, and I can’t make exceptions. For your own good, I don’t want you to come out.” So Frieda stayed home.

He often forbade her to do things “for her own good,” and he had become obsessive about what he called her “innocence.” In his determination that even her mind should remain virginal, he carefully arranged her life so that she would meet neither men nor girls her own age. He kept her busy with volunteer work and fund-raising. Anders Zorn painted Frieda Schiff’s portrait during that lonely winter of her eighteenth year, and her dewy innocence shines from the canvas. She was high-cheekboned, with a thin, patrician nose, clear-eyed, dark-haired, slim-waisted, dressed in pink. She had one advantage to outweigh some of the drawbacks that went with being Jacob Schiff’s daughter: she was beautiful.

She was permitted to have an eighteenth-birthday party, memorable because a musical teen-ager named Walter Damrosch sang and acted out a parody on Wagner’s Rhine Maidens while standing in a tin tub full of water. But otherwise the year had been unexceptional and unrewarding. She had had no experience with boys whatever, beyond stiff and formal conversations with male partners at her father’s stiff and formal dinner parties, where the young people were always seated “below the salt.” Whenever a boy spoke to her she blushed fiercely.

That summer Jacob and Therese Schiff took Frieda and Morti on another of their ritual grand tours of Europe. One of the stops was, naturally, Frankfurt, where the Schiffs were invited to dinner at the home of some people named Dreyfus, who were Loeb cousins. “Are there any young men I would like in Frankfurt?” Frieda whispered furtively to a friend.

“Oh, you must meet Felix Warburg,” said the friend. “He’s the handsomest man in town.”

A Warburg family genealogy, prepared in 1937 and updated in 1953, fills a volume very nearly the weight of Webster’s International Dictionary, and the Warburgs take their family with even heavier seriousness. The Warburgs put the lie to the much-repeated claim that “all the best Jews are from Frankfurt” (whence, of course, come Schiffs and Rothschilds). The Warburgs are from Hamburg. The family is said to have originated centuries ago in Italy (many Warburgs have a Latin look), where the name was del Banco, “the bankers,” since Jews were not permitted personal surnames. Recorded history first places them, however, in Warburgum (or Warburg), a small town in central Germany, from where, over three hundred years ago, they migrated north to Hamburg.

The Warburg claim to being one of the world’s noblest Jewish families (and the Warburgs are far too proud to actually *make* such a claim; they let it be made for them) is based on many things. A great many Warburgs are wealthy, and have been for several hundred years, but the splendid ring of the Warburg name has more to it than money. The family bank, M. M. Warburg & Company in Hamburg, was an ancient affair, founded in 1798, which lasted well into the Hitler era, when it was forcibly confiscated in 1938 by non-Jews. The Warburgs have also been distinguished in fields other than banking; they are a particularly *rounded* family. There have been Warburgs prominent in the military, in manufacturing, medicine, politics, book publishing, diplomacy, education, and the arts. There have been Warburg authors, scientists, composers, critics, inventors, and professors.

There are Warburgs today in every corner of the world—from New York to London to Shanghai to Tokyo to Melbourne. One family habit, which helps keep the Warburgs straight in various parts of the globe, is to give Warburg children first names appropriate to the countries where they were born. Thus Elena, Oliviero, Gioconda, Francesca, and Italo Warburg are all

Rome Warburgs. Eva and Charlotte Warburg, who became Israeli Warburgs, have children named Dvorah, Gabriel, Benjamin, Tama, and Niva. Ingrid is a Stockholm Warburg. When Renata Warburg was married to Dr. Richard Samson, she tried hard to conform to his mystic Indian cult of *Mazdasnan* and lived for a while with the Maharaja of Indore. Their child, Matanya, is therefore a Zoroastrian Warburg, or at least a Warburg from his mother's maharaja period. She later divorced Samson, left India, married a man named Walter Strauss, moved to Glasgow, and named her next child Carol.

Felix Warburg, who, Frieda Schiff had been told, was the handsomest man in town, was the son of Moritz Warburg, and Moritz Warburg was the youngest of six children of Abraham and Sara Warburg. Abraham Warburg died when Moritz was very young, but Sara Warburg, one of several strong-willed Warburg women, remained very much alive. Moritz's older brother Siegmund became titular head of the bank after his father's death, but as long as Sara lived Siegmund and Moritz had to report to their mother each evening after the Stock Exchange had closed. They brought their account books with them, and Sara grilled them thoroughly on each detail of each transaction. The two men's wives waited patiently at home until Sara was satisfied that the boys had put in a profitable day at the bank and dismissed them with a little wave of her hand. If Sara was not satisfied, she would sit very still in her thronelike chair, gazing at her sons hard and long. Then she would say, "Now. Explain yourselves. Siegmund, speak first." On such nights, the lights in Sara's big house in Rothenbaum Chaussee burned late.

Sara was widely respected by men because she "thought like a man," and she had many influential men friends, among them the poet Heinrich Heine,* who once dedicated a poem to her (and it was not a poem about banking, either), and Prince Otto von Bismarck. Like her spiritual sister, Henriette Hellman Seligman in the United States, Sara was not a woman to be put off by royalty. She and the Prince corresponded regularly, and each year it was her custom to send him a package of Passover cookies. But one year the imperial court chaplain preached some anti-Semitic statements which incensed Sara. Bismarck was not really responsible for them, but he did not reproach the chaplain, and Sara decided that her friendship with the Prince should be terminated. At Easter, when the Prince had not received his customary cookies, he sent an aide to see Sara and ask what had happened. Sara told the Prince's emissary loftily, "If he doesn't know, tell

him to come and ask me himself. But he won't ask. He knows quite well why he didn't get his cookies." He never did ask, and he never received any cookies from Sara again.

Sara's son Moritz married Charlotte Oppenheim, and they had seven children—Aby M., Max M., Paul M., Felix M., Olga M., Fritz M., and Louise M. Warburg. Felix Warburg used to sign his letters:



because he saw the Warburgs represented in the heavens, with each of the Warburg children a star in the Big Dipper. This Warburg family lived at Mittelweg 17 and were known as “the Mittelweg Warburgs” to distinguish them from Siegmund Warburg’s family, who lived on Alsterufer and were called “the Alsterufer Warburgs.” To confuse things somewhat, both Siegmund and Moritz had sons named Aby, after their joint grandfather. But, to unconfuse them somewhat, the Mittelweg Aby—and all the other Mittelweg Warburgs—had the middle initial “M,” which was not for “Mittelweg,” but for Moritz, their father. Still, all those M’s helped keep the Mittelweg Warburgs straight. Meanwhile, the Alsterufer Warburgs gave their children the middle initial “S,” for Siegmund. This tradition has been carried on in both branches of the family.

Felix’s mother, Charlotte, was like her mother-in-law Sara, a strong-minded woman who openly dominated her timid little husband, who, by the time she met him, was already used to being cowed. Charlotte also took pride in herself as a matchmaker, and was forever inviting young couples to dinner, where her practice was to send them out for walks in the twilight afterward, and then lock the French windows behind them. She would not let any of her “matches” back inside the house until, as she put it, “it” had happened.

Felix's father, Moritz, was the official leader of the sixteen thousand Jews in Hamburg. He thoroughly disapproved of the migratory wave of young Jews out of Germany in the 1850's, '60's, and '70's. For one thing, M. M. Warburg & Company was prospering, and he saw no need for any of his sons to "seek their fortune" in any such distant place as the United States. Also, as one of the family wrote of him, Moritz was a man "not distinguished by great physical courage." The thought of himself or any member of his family crossing the Atlantic terrified him. "*Das Wasser hat keine Balken*," he used to say—"Water isn't very solid"—and once, when his mother ordered him to England on business, he begged her not to make him go. But Sara insisted, and Moritz crossed the Channel on his knees, praying all the way. When required to serve in the Hamburg City Militia, Moritz enlisted as a trumpeter. His wife, either proudly or mischievously, used to show the certificate he got for this service to everyone who came to the house. Moritz was also vain, and covered his baldness with wigs of varying lengths.

The Warburg children were, on the other hand, a bold, bright, and lively lot. Felix and his brothers were strikingly handsome youngsters, dark-haired with snapping black eyes. There is some argument today about "the Warburg mouth," which is said not to have been "good" where the boys were concerned. But the boys, as soon as they were able, wore the heavy mustaches that were the style of the period, so their mouths didn't matter. Felix, like his name, had a happy face, and his mustache curled upward. His brother Paul had a sad face, and his mustache turned down. Paul was a scholar. Felix was a blade. He loved beautiful things—beautiful women, music, books, paintings, horses, sailboats, clothes, and (in time) motorcars. He was also something of a rebel. He openly scorned the conventional Jewish orthodoxy of his home, which he used to say was "maintained more from tradition than from conviction." He was embarrassed by such rules as having to have a servant carry his textbooks to school for Saturday sessions, and having to adhere to the dietary laws whenever he went to a restaurant or traveled. He itched to go places and become his own man.

His oldest brother, Aby, was a rebel too. He had married a girl named Mary Hertz, described in the family as "an unusual girl"—unusual in that she was not Jewish. It was the first Warburg mixed marriage, and it stirred

up such a storm that the couple were asked, “out of respect to the Jewish community of Hamburg,” to leave the city to wed.

At sixteen Felix was taken out of school and sent south to Frankfurt to work for his mother’s family, the Oppenheims, who had a precious-stone business there. His brother Max was already in Frankfurt, studying business, and the boys’ mother wrote to Max telling him to take good care of Felix, and see that he took “language and violin lessons, select nice friends for him, prevent him from being too extravagant, and see to it that he takes one bath weekly.” But Felix could take care of himself. He was already a *bon vivant*, and he cut quite a swathe in Frankfurt. In his snappy dogcart he drove his young friends and his Italian teacher (he had selected a very pretty young woman to teach him that language) on gay excursions to the Waeldchen, Frankfurt’s prettiest park. In Frankfurt he met Clara Schumann, the widow of Robert Schumann the composer, and Mme. Schumann developed quite a case on Felix Warburg. This raised an eyebrow or two. He was just eighteen; she was nearly seventy.

Felix Warburg very nearly didn’t go to the Dreyfuses’ party. The Dreyfuses, he said, gave “the dullest parties in Frankfurt,” and he was not a man who liked dull parties. But his parents, who were visiting in Frankfurt, insisted because their old friend Jacob Schiff would be there, and they reminded Felix that Schiff had given the Warburg boys a toy fort during the period he had worked for the Deutsche Bank.

So, reluctantly, Felix went, and met Frieda Schiff, who was wearing the pale pink gown Zorn had painted her in. “I don’t *think* I flirted,” she said many years later, “because I had been brought up so strictly, and had gone out so little, that I was not too certain of myself.”

That night Felix went home, long after midnight, knocked on his parents’ door, and said, “I have met the girl I’m going to marry.”

Matchmaker Charlotte was disgruntled because this was a match she had not arranged. Moritz Warburg was even more distressed when he heard that it was an American girl. Sitting up in his bed in his nightshirt and cap, he cried, “She will have to live in Germany, you know!”

*Heine also turns up in the Schiff family tree; his stepgrandfather was a Schiff.

MARRIAGE, SCHIFF STYLE

The morning after Felix's announcement, Moritz Warburg paid a call on the Schiffs. The meeting did not go well. Mr. Warburg stalked out of the Schiffs' suite wearing a face of stone, and Jacob Schiff calmly announced that the family was moving on to Paris.

In Paris the Schiffs went to the races at Longchamp, and who should suddenly show up there but Felix Warburg, who had followed them from Frankfurt. He presented himself to the Schiff party, and stayed very close to Frieda while her father became increasingly agitated. At the end of the afternoon he told Frieda flatly that she was not permitted to see Felix again. "I took her to Europe to get her out of the way of temptation," he roared, "and now this happens!"

In addition to his wish to preserve Frieda's "innocence," there were several things that Jacob disliked about Felix Warburg. For one, Felix wasn't a banker. Though New York firms practiced nepotism extensively, there was a rule at the Warburg bank to prevent, or at least control, it: no more than two sons of a senior partner could enter the firm. Since Felix's older brothers, Max and Paul, were already in the bank, Felix could never work for M. M. Warburg & Company. If Frieda wished to marry a Warburg, Jacob said, why didn't she marry Paul or Max? But in any case Jacob would never permit her to marry a man who would make her live in Germany. Behind these illogical arguments there hung the fact that Schiff distrusted Felix's manner. Felix was witty and lively, and Schiff was uncomfortable when faced with anything as intangible as bounce. He did not like jokes; *bon vivants* alarmed him. Felix's nickname was "Fizzie," after the Vichy Celestin "fizzie water" he loved to drink, but "fizzie" also described his personality. There was a slight cleft in Felix's chin which Schiff saw as a

sign of weakness of character. The real truth, however, was that he didn't want his daughter to marry anyone.

When the Schiffs arrived at Gastein, Felix Warburg turned up again. While Jacob was taking the waters one afternoon, Frieda and Felix met secretly in the park. They walked for a while, and then he stopped her under a plane tree and said, "Isn't it a beautiful day?" "Yes," said Frieda. "This is a beautiful place," he said. "Yes," she agreed. "Would you ever like to live in Germany?" he asked her. Frieda was terrified. She ran home to her mother and gasped, "I think he proposed!"

Immediately, a council of war was called and an elaborate set of plans was developed. It was decided that the Schiff and Warburg families should have a summit conference on the matter, and on neutral territory. Ostend on the Belgian coast was selected. First, a formal dinner was given by the Warburgs at their favorite kosher restaurant. That went reasonably well (Schiff was a great believer in the power of formal dinners to solve most problems). Next, Mr. Schiff gave a luncheon for the Warburgs at his hotel. The headwaiter suggested fresh Channel lobsters, which were nonkosher. Schiff ordered filet of sole. But somehow a mistake was made and the lobsters were served anyway, and Mr. Schiff flew into one of his towering rages. The lunch was a disaster.

A tactic was at last agreed upon, however, which, though not very entertaining for the two young people, assured them of remaining in some sort of communication. Frieda and her family would return to New York, and there, her father explained, Felix would write a weekly letter to Schiff, who would respond with a weekly letter to Felix. Frieda was to institute a similar schedule of letters between herself and Felix's mother. Frieda and Felix were under no circumstances to write each other. This program was to continue until such time as Felix was able to come to New York. The two young people parted without so much as a farewell kiss.

In New York, the letter-writing began. Sometimes her father showed Frieda his letters to Felix before posting them. Written in German, they used the formal "*Sie*," a form reserved for use when speaking to one or more persons with whom one is not on familiar terms. But once Frieda noticed that her father had at last written to Felix using "*Du*," the familiar form. She was overjoyed and hugged and thanked her father for unbending this much. Without a word, Jacob Schiff took out his gold penknife,

scratched out every “*Du*,” and substituted “*Sie*” throughout. It was a letter, furthermore, inviting Felix to join Kuhn, Loeb & Company in New York.

Felix Warburg did not particularly want to work for Jacob Schiff. He was never to become a great financier (though he did possess other talents which, in time, became very useful to Schiff). But he did love Frieda, and Schiff had set an unalterable condition: Felix could not have Frieda unless he took, in the bargain, Kuhn, Loeb. As Felix was preparing to leave Germany for New York, his father called him aside and said, “My son, I have just one request to make of you.” Felix was certain that his father was about to make him promise to bring his young wife back to Germany or, at the very least, to ask him to keep the dietary laws. But his father said, “Do not take the iced drinks that spoil Americans’ digestions and force them to go to Carlsbad for a cure.” Felix arrived in New York in 1895, and immediately went to work.

Schiff’s attitude toward his future son-in-law did not soften much during the “courtship” period that followed. He arranged things so that the young couple saw almost nothing of each other. When they did meet, they were heavily chaperoned. His concern for Frieda’s innocence continued, and he enjoined both her mother and her grandmother from mentioning “ugly” truths.

Therese Schiff obeyed her husband, but Grandmother Betty Loeb had her own ideas. She had become interested in nursing and obstetrics, and was getting a reputation as an “advanced” woman. Betty even read the novels of Zola openly! On her book shelves behind locked glass doors were books dealing with the physical side of marriage, and she was determined to have a talk with Frieda. But Jacob got wind of this, and refused to let Frieda see her grandmother unless there was a third person present. Betty Loeb did manage to get Frieda alone one afternoon and to say to her, “It’s normal for a girl to be upset and nervous at a time like this. Being engaged is unnatural. A girl should either be not engaged at all or married.” It was some help, but not much.

The dashing young man about to carry off their loveliest young princess was referred to by German Jewish society as “The Black Prince.” As the day of the ceremony approached, tensions in the Schiff household mounted. It was to be an at-home wedding at 932 Fifth, and, adding to the other complications, was the caterer’s news that no more than 125 guests could

be fitted into the house, and, a week before the wedding, 145 had accepted. Jacob Schiff struck a seerlike pose and announced, “Twenty will not come.” Later, Frieda Schiff Warburg wrote: “As always his forecast was right. Two days before the ceremony, Mrs. James Seligman died, and her entire family, numbering exactly twenty, couldn’t come.”*

Frieda Schiff’s and Felix Warburg’s marriage was called “dynastic,” and it did seem to represent a consolidation of Kuhn, Loeb power. There they all were—old Solomon Loeb, who had founded the firm but had withdrawn altogether a few years earlier in favor of his son-in-law, the father of the bride. There was Solomon’s old partner, Abraham Wolff, whose daughter Addie was a bridesmaid and who—in another Kuhn, Loeb wedding—would very soon marry another partner, Otto Kahn. There was Solomon’s son Morris, not a banker but married that same year to Abe Kuhn’s daughter, Eda, another bridesmaid. The bride’s aunt, Nina Loeb, was maid of honor, and Paul Warburg had come from Germany to be his brother’s best man. These two met for the first time at the wedding and fell in love, which would give Solomon another son-in-law in the firm, which would make Nina her niece’s sister-in-law and make Paul Warburg his brother’s uncle.

Since the Schiffs belonged to two congregations, Temple Emanu-El and Beth-El, two rabbis performed the ceremony—Dr. Gustav Gottheil and Dr. Kaufmann Kohler. It was a glittering occasion, but the business overtones of the union almost overshadowed the happiness of the newlyweds. While the women speculated about the suitability of Felix as a husband, the men considered his promise as a partner. But the most historically significant fact was that Frieda Schiff had achieved her first victory over her father, and had managed to marry the man she loved.

From the house the couple went to the Plaza, where Felix, in his nervousness, forgot to register his bride. From there, they went on a short trip to Washington, where Frieda, in *her* nervousness, realized that she was without a personal maid for the first time in her life. Faced with the problem of packing suitcases and not knowing how to begin, she burst into tears and Felix had to help her, wrestling manfully with unfamiliar crinolines. They returned to New York long enough to board the S.S. *Kaiser Wilhelm II* for a cruise to Italy, but this time Jacob Schiff assigned one of his wife’s personal

maids, Hermine, to accompany Frieda. Hermine proved to be quite a trial. Felix Warburg used to say, "I spent my honeymoon with a German governess." Hermine would not let Frieda wear any of her trousseau on the boat so that the dresses would be fresh for Italy, where the senior Warburgs were to meet them, and she scolded Frieda whenever she got a spot on any of her other dresses. Also, possibly acting on instructions from Jacob Schiff, she was reluctant to let the newlyweds spend any private moments together. She was forever fussing around the stateroom and seemed miffed that she had not been given an adjoining cabin. Still, Frieda and Felix managed to find some time together. Frieda Warburg became pregnant with her first child on her honeymoon, just as her mother had done.

Frieda was delighted with this news, and said to her mother that she believed in young marriages, and "If this one's a boy, I'm going to take up the rug in his room, take out his bed, and make him sleep on a cot as soon as he's old enough to marry," to force him out of the nest. Therese Schiff looked disapproving, and announced that, on the contrary, she was turning an upper floor of 932 Fifth into a bachelor's apartment for Morti, "So my son may stay with me as long as he wishes."

During Frieda's wedding trip, her father wrote:

Dear children,

You shall not come home without receiving at least one letter from me, but as I telegraphed you frequently [using his Western Union franking privilege, of course] I suppose you are in any event satisfied.

...

"Satisfied." On this stiff note he seems to realize how unfeeling he sounds, and suddenly the tone of the letter changes, loosens, expands, letting a bit more of his heart show as he swiftly continues:

... I need not tell you how happy dear Mama and I are in your own young happiness, which, God grant it, may last for many years without a cloud obscuring it, and if trials come, without which hardly any human life exists, your deep love for each other will give you strength to bear whatever God destines for you.

When the young Warburgs returned to New York, they moved to a hotel while their first house was being finished for them. But Jacob, upset at the news of his daughter's condition, at the loss of her precious innocence, would not come to the hotel to see them, or even telephone, refusing to ask for Frieda by her new name.

Frieda and Felix did go to the Schiffs' house for dinner. At one point during that dinner, Frieda turned to her father and asked him a question. It was a simple question—she could never remember, afterward, just what it was because her father suddenly lost his composure completely and cried out, "*Why do you ask me? You have your husband to turn to now!*"

* Frieda's nervous state may have played tricks on her memory, because Rosa Content Seligman did not die until twelve years later. But some member of the crowd with twenty relatives apparently did die that week.

“THE BATTLE OF THE GIANTS”

Jacob Schiff was never quite sure whether he approved of young Otto Kahn. For one thing, Kahn, though he had not gone as far as August Belmont and changed his name, was something of a religious turncoat. (Otto Kahn has been called “the flyleaf between the Old and New Testament”) Also, Kahn, like his friend and contemporary, Felix Warburg, had a taste for high life and, of all things, Bohemia. Kahn liked to surround himself with painters and poets and playwrights and, as a boy growing up in Mannheim, he had dreamed of being a poet himself. (His mother, however, who steadfastly maintained that he had no talent, finally convinced him to burn all his manuscripts, including two five-act plays in blank verse, so the Otto Kahn works were lost to the world.) Kahn spoke with a clipped English accent, ordered his suits from Savile Row, quoted Ibsen and Walter Pater and Carlyle, and sang in the office—all of which Schiff found disconcerting. But Schiff had to admit that Kahn was a promising financier.

From Mannheim, Kahn had gone to London in 1888, where he became a British subject and worked for the English office of the Deutsche Bank. Within a year he had become the bank’s vice manager, and was hobnobbing with such intellectual and theatrical figures of the day as Richard Le Gallienne, H. G. Wells, Beerbohm Tree, Maxine Elliott, Henry Irving and Harley Granville-Barker. He went to parties with the Prince of Wales, whom he had been told he resembled. He also knew the London Warburgs and, for a while, shared a bachelors’ flat with Paul Warburg during the latter’s stay in England on family business. At the invitation of Speyer & Company,* Kahn had come to New York in 1893. He was then twenty-seven. There he met Abe Wolff’s daughter Addie, and in 1896, a few months after Frieda Schiff’s marriage to Felix Warburg, he entered Kuhn,

Loeb & Company in what was becoming a time-honored way, by marrying a partner's daughter.

Kahn's initial contribution was an unusual one. People, seeing pale, wheezing E. H. Harriman coming down the street toward them, darted into doorways to avoid him. Yet Otto Kahn saw something in this strange little man that was deeper than his unappetizing appearance. Kahn, in fact, found himself getting along with Harriman even better than Schiff did. It was surprising, really, because Kahn's nature was smiling and expansive, Harriman's dour and withdrawn. But because Kahn seemed to understand him and respect him, and was willing to converse with him, Harriman liked and respected Otto Kahn. Jacob Schiff was happy to watch this unusual friendship ripen. He himself had always regarded Harriman more as a business associate than as a friend, and since the Union Pacific reorganization this relationship had been secure.

Of Harriman, Kahn wrote candidly:

His was the genius of the conqueror, his dominion was based on rugged strength, iron will, irresistible determination, indomitable courage and, upon those qualities of character which command men's trust and confidence. He was constitutionally unable either to cajole or dissemble. He was stiff-necked to a fault. It would have saved him much opposition, many enemies, many misunderstandings, if he had possessed the gift of suavity.... I ventured to plead with him that the results he sought could just as surely be obtained by less combative, more gentle methods, while at the same time avoiding bad blood and ill feeling. Invariably his answer was: "You may be right that these things could be so accomplished, but not by me. I can work only in my own way. I cannot make myself different, nor act in a way foreign to me. They will have to take me as I am or drop me. This is not arrogance on my part. I simply cannot achieve anything if I try to compromise with my nature and to follow the notions of others."

Gradually, Otto Kahn became the bank's chief liaison with Harriman, while, in the meantime, Jacob Schiff cultivated the garrulous, easygoing company of James J. Hill. With this arrangement—having the two most powerful railroad men of the age as virtually daily visitors to the Kuhn,

Loeb offices—it must have seemed to Schiff in 1900 as though, except for a few details such as J. P. Morgan, he had American railroads in his pocket.

To unify his Union Pacific system, Ned Harriman had, with the help of Kuhn, Loeb, purchased two smaller lines, the Oregon Short Line and the Oregon Railroad & Navigation Company. This accomplished, he decided that he also wanted a line called the Chicago-Burlington & Quincy, a rich line which fanned through some of the richest country in the West. Its fingers stretched to Mississippi River ports, to mining towns in Colorado and the Black Hills, and to farm lands in Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska. Harriman wanted the Burlington, as he explained, partly because it was a competitor for business in Union Pacific territory, but also because he feared that at any moment the Burlington might extend its main line from Denver to the Pacific Coast. This would make the Burlington a Union Pacific competitor on a transcontinental as well as a local level.

However, when Harriman began quietly to dicker for the Burlington, he found his way blocked by “subtle but powerful forces.” Someone else was interested in the Burlington, and had already been quietly buying up its stock. Harriman mentioned his fears to Otto Kahn, and the two men approached Kuhn, Loeb’s senior partner, Jacob Schiff. Schiff listened in silence, and then said, “I will ask Hill about it.” That evening, at his house, Schiff asked Hill point-blank, “Are you buying Burlington?” Hill laughed and replied, “Absolutely not.” Schiff then returned to Harriman and assured him that Hill had no interest in the line.

Hill, however, had not been telling the truth. He had, early in 1901, decided that he wanted a feeder line for his Great Northern and Northern Pacific. His banker, Morgan, had recommended that Hill buy the St. Paul Railway, but Hill was convinced that the Burlington was the better line. Morgan gave in and, long before Harriman had let his hungry gaze fall upon the line, Hill-Morgan interests had begun buying up the Burlington on behalf of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific. As the two railroading giants, one with a monopoly on the Southwest and the other controlling the Northwest, squared off to do battle, two facts were pertinent. Morgan, who represented Hill, had a personal, almost psychopathic hatred of Harriman and fumed at the mention of his name. Schiff, on the other hand, who represented Harriman, was Hill’s friend. If anyone was to mediate, or referee the fight, it would have to be Schiff.

Schiff paid another of his polite visits on Morgan and asked him the same question he had asked Hill. Morgan, who could be ruthless but was seldom devious, admitted that he and Hill were in fact buying the Burlington. Schiff then began to argue for a “community of interests.” It was to become one of Jacob Schiff’s key phrases, but at the time it belonged to Morgan, who had defined it, saying, “The community of interests is the principle that a certain number of men who own property can do what they like with it” Schiff was using the community-of-interests argument deliberately, aware of the appeal of the concept to Morgan, to try to persuade Morgan to let Harriman have an interest in the Burlington purchase, and a share in the management. Morgan refused. A grim-faced Jacob Schiff now sent for James J. Hill.

On a balmy April evening in 1901, Jim Hill arrived from Washington. He was in a buoyant mood. That afternoon he had finished negotiations for the purchase of the Chicago-Burlington & Quincy, and the contract was to be signed the following morning. His railroads, the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern, would then own more than 96 percent of the Burlington stock, for which he and Morgan had paid as much as \$200 a share, far above the market value. The young man who met Hill at the ferry dock was nervous. It was Morti Schiff. “Father is waiting for you at Mr. Baker’s house,” said Morti. “Did you get his message?”

“Yes,” said Hill. “Is Harriman there also?”

“I believe so.”

“Good!” said Hill breezily.

The two set off. The meeting, arranged by Schiff, was a last-ditch effort to ward off a battle, and was to be held on neutral territory at the home of Hill’s friend, George F. Baker, the so-called “Sphinx of Wall Street,” president of the First National Bank, the city’s largest.

With Hill’s arrival, the atmosphere of the gathering in Baker’s library grew tense. Schiff’s customary regal poise was overlaid with frost, and, after greeting Hill curtly, Schiff said a few brief words about their long friendship and then asked Hill abruptly, “Why did you lie to me a month ago and say you had no intention of buying the Burlington?”

Hill’s candor was as remarkable as his good spirits. “I *had* to,” he replied. “After all, I knew you were interested in the Union Pacific.”

Schiff gave him a contemptuous look, and then asked once more that Harriman be given at least a small share in the Burlington purchase.

“Oh, I don’t think so,” said Hill cheerfully. “You see, I want it all.”

Harriman, who at that point had been pacing the floor “in suppressed excitement,” sprang at Hill and said, “Very well! This is a hostile act and you must take the consequences!”

Hill merely waved his hand and walked out of the room.

On April 20 the announcement of Hill’s purchase was made. Morgan, his duties as Hill’s banker over, set off for Europe to take the waters at Aix-en-Provence and to visit his beautiful French mistress. Hill, in even better spirits than he had been in at Mr. Baker’s house, boarded his private train for a long holiday in the American Northwest. Nobody had reckoned with the rage of Ned Harriman, who had once boasted to Otto Kahn, “Let me be but one of fifteen men around a table, and I will have my way.”

To get his place at the Burlington’s table, Harriman’s scheme was simple—and outrageous. If Hill’s Northern Pacific now owned the Burlington, Harriman would buy up the Northern Pacific. If, in other words, he could not buy Hill’s railroad, he would buy up Hill. The boldness of the scheme boggled the imagination. And it quickened the pulses of a number of Wall Street figures, among them James Stillman of the National City Bank, and one of Stillman’s most important customers, Rockefeller and Standard Oil. Wall Street might have laughed at Harriman once, but—with the help of Schiff—he was the man who had helped turn the defunct Union Pacific into one of the country’s most profitable lines. Harriman had been given complete control of the Union Pacific’s finances, and now, to implement his great plan, he demanded permission of the Union Pacific’s board to issue \$60 million worth of new bonds.

Whether or not to participate in Harriman’s plan was the most agonizing decision of Jacob Schiff’s career. What was at stake was merely everything, so far as he was concerned. One did not lose a battle with a man like Morgan and survive. All night long, he paced the floor of his Fifth Avenue house, weighing the possibilities, while Therese begged him to come to bed. The sun was up before he decided. He would go along with Harriman.

It would take \$60 million and more to do what Harriman had in mind. After all, the goal this time was not just to buy up a defunct railroad at twenty or thirty cents on the dollar. To succeed, Harriman and Schiff would have to go into the stock market and to private investors all over the country and, as quickly and secretly as possible, to buy up, from the strongest

railroad-Wall Street combination in the world, the controlling interest in a \$115 million corporation.

Schiff had warned Harriman that the price of Northern Pacific stock would begin to rise as soon as Kuhn, Loeb's brokers went into the market and started buying it. To account for the rise, Schiff suggested an explanation of childlike simplicity. He would start a rumor on the Street that Northern Pacific was rising because of Hill's purchase of the Burlington. The Northern Pacific was nicknamed the "Nipper," and Kuhn, Loeb men began saying, "Nipper's going up, now that Hill's got a new line." Ironically, the explanation satisfied partners at the House of Morgan as well as Hill's men on the Street, who cheerfully began selling large blocks of stock to the enemy. Playing right into Harriman's hands, the House of Morgan disposed of \$14 million worth of Northern Pacific by the first of May—all of which found its way into the hands of Schiff and Harriman.

One begins to sense the size of Edward Harriman's ego here. Harriman wanted to corner the Northern Pacific not for money, nor even for power. He wanted nothing but revenge on Hill and Morgan—to get even with them for excluding him from the Burlington's board. Privately, Jacob Schiff began warning him that he might be going too far. But Harriman at this point was intractable.

Jim Hill was superstitious and a believer in omens, and he was in Seattle on the last day of April when "a dark-complected angel" appeared to him in a dream as he lay in his canopied Louis Seize bed in his private car. The vision told him that all was not well in New York, and he immediately ordered his train turned around and headed East at top speed. He arrived in New York on Friday, May 3, breaking a transcontinental record. He went immediately to Kuhn, Loeb, walked into Jacob Schiff's office, and demanded to know why Northern Pacific had risen so rapidly. With a smile, Jacob Schiff informed him that Kuhn, Loeb was buying Northern Pacific "on orders from the Union Pacific"—or Harriman.

Angrily, Hill said, "All right. Do your damndest. But you can't get control. Morgan and my friends alone hold \$40 million worth of Northern Pacific, and as far as I know none of them has sold a share."

"That may well be," said Schiff carefully, knowing that Hill's statement would have been true a week earlier, but was no longer. "But we've got a lot of it, Jim. After all, you secretly bought the Burlington and wouldn't

give us a share. Now we're going to see if we can get a share by buying a controlling interest in the Northern Pacific."

Hill pressed Schiff to find out how much stock he had, but Schiff would only repeat, "A lot of it, Jim. A lot." Nervously, Hill took out his little bag of uncut stones and began to worry them between his fingers.

At that point, Schiff made a final peace offer. He and Harriman would stop buying, he said, and would gradually return the Northern Pacific stock to the market, if Hill would give Harriman a place on the Burlington's board. It was all Harriman had wanted to begin with. Hill seemed to waver, and Schiff said quickly, "Come to dinner at my house tonight. We'll talk it over."

The stock market closed that afternoon at a new high, led by the Northern Pacific Railroad. The stock had also leaped ahead on the London Exchange. Outside speculators were moving in, and brokers were selling short. The mood of the street was feverish.

One must admire the poise and Himalayan coolness of Jacob Schiff at this moment. It was a Friday evening at the Schiffs. Fortunes hung in the balance, to say nothing of Jacob Schiff's own future as a businessman, yet no detail was altered from the family ritual. In the upstairs sitting room the Sabbath candles were lighted, and the children gathered in a circle to be blessed. Then their father read his Friday evening service, and the family descended to the dining room to meet their dinner guest. Jacob Schiff said grace as always, and the children recalled later that when he came to the words, "For those less fortunate than we," his blue eyes traveled briefly and humorously to rest on Mr. Hill. Dinner continued in its customary stately way.

After dinner, in the library over their cigars and brandy, the two men got down to business. Jacob Schiff explained that his group now controlled 370,000 shares of Northern Pacific common stock, and about 420,000 shares of preferred—or \$79 million worth on a basis of par valuation. Hill, nodding jerkily, immediately said that Harriman could go on the Burlington board. There was no question of it. "You have won," Hill said. "I salute you." The two men talked on for hours, and it was well after midnight when Hill rose to go. He clasped Jacob Schiff's hand and said once more, "Harriman shall go on the Burlington board tomorrow. You have my word for it." As the two said good night, Hill is said to have brushed aside a tear.

If so, it was a crocodile tear. Once more, Hill was showing himself to be a man who could not be trusted. Before appearing at the Schiff house for dinner, Hill had gone to the Morgan office, conferred with the partners, and had sent a cable to Morgan himself asking permission to buy 150,000 more shares of Northern Pacific to strengthen his position. Morgan had wired back approval. Hill had never intended to admit Harriman to the Burlington board. He had just begun to fight.

Harriman, meanwhile, was nervous. The shares he and Schiff had acquired, both common and preferred, did, taken together, constitute a clear majority of the two classes of stock. Taken separately, however, Harriman lacked—by some forty thousand shares—a majority of the common stock. On Saturday morning, therefore, he telephoned a Kuhn, Loeb broker named Heinsheimer and ordered forty thousand more shares of Northern Pacific “at the market.”* But Schiff, having taken Hill at his word, had left instructions at the office to buy no more Northern Pacific. In a dilemma, Heinsheimer tried to find Schiff—it was a five-million-dollar order—and learned that he was at the synagogue. Heinsheimer rushed uptown to Temple Emanu-El and looked for Schiff among the worshipers. Finding him, and making his way into a seat beside him, Heinsheimer whispered, “Harriman wants forty thousand more NP.” Without lifting his eyes from his prayer book, Schiff replied, “Do not buy it. I’ll take the responsibility.”

Perhaps it was because of the unusual surroundings in which Schiff issued his instructions that an oversight of considerable proportions took place. For some reason, Harriman was never advised of Schiff’s advice to Heinsheimer, and Harriman spent the weekend confident that he owned a majority of both the preferred and the common stock. On Monday morning, Jim Keene, a famous stock manipulator of the era, hired by Hill and Morgan, moved into the stock market with his team of brokers and began buying up the 150,000 shares Hill had ordered—\$15 million worth. The price of Northern Pacific began to climb. By noon, it had reached no ... then 117 ... then 127. By Tuesday it had jumped to 149³/₄, and it was then that Harriman learned, to his dismay, that his order had not been executed. At the stock’s inflated price, he could no longer afford to buy.

Brokers still speculate why Schiff stopped Harriman’s order. (In his characteristic way, Schiff himself never offered an explanation.) The most common reason given is that the pious Jacob would not handle the

transaction because it was ordered on a Saturday, which is ridiculous. Others have said that Schiff prudently foresaw the panic that was coming, and decided to let Hill and Morgan charge on alone, wreck the economy, and take full blame for it. This is possible, but unlikely. The plain fact was that Schiff had believed Hill, and could not imagine that Hill would betray him a second time. Still—though, as it turned out, it would have made no difference—somebody should have told Harriman. On Wednesday morning the Northern Pacific hit 180, and Wall Street went wild. The stock was behaving similarly in London, and British bankers were cabling furiously for more shares. When the stock reached 200, many speculators sold, anticipating a break and hoping to buy in again at lower prices. They did not realize, however, that neither Hill nor Harriman intended to sell and take profits. Harriman had locked up his shares, and Hill, having got as many more shares as possible, was also sitting tight. Speculators had taken over.

By mid-week European bankers had become alarmed and reversed their previously liberal policies on American loans. The Bank of England warned the London joint-stock banks against New York. While American credit teetered, the two antagonists stood firm, refusing to move. At the height of things, sickly Ned Harriman was suddenly stricken with appendicitis and was rushed to a hospital. Coming out of the anesthetic, he demanded a telephone and attendants were astonished to hear him put in a call to James J. Hill. “Hill?” he said when he reached his party. “This is Harriman. I just wanted to tell you that the operation is over and I’m still alive.” He then collapsed on his hospital bed.

By Thursday Jacob Schiff was speaking of a “deplorable situation” that had developed. The Northern Pacific had hit 1000, and it was suddenly clear to Wall Street that the stock had been cornered. Millions of dollars’ worth of shares had been sold which did not exist, and millions of dollars would be needed to settle the debts. It was, in the words of one financial historian, “finance run mad.” Suddenly, the Northern Pacific broke violently, and the market followed, with some of the soundest stocks declining by 50 percent or more. Cornered brokers scurried frantically—and futilely—to cover themselves, but Wall Street had become literally insolvent. Others placed pistols to their temples. It was the most ferocious financial panic in history.

Later, the Northern Pacific corner and the panic that followed became known as “the Battle of the Giants,” and the four main participants—Hill and Morgan, Harriman and Schiff—were depicted as ravenous gorgons, fattening themselves on the American public. Hill and Harriman and their respective bankers were portrayed as having deliberately and singlehandedly set out to smash the economy. Harriman, whose unpleasant nature and aspect had already made him thoroughly hated, gained no new popularity, and Jacob Schiff now shared Harriman’s notoriety. Morgan, meanwhile, did not become more publicly beloved when he returned from Europe and, asked by a reporter whether he didn’t owe the American public an explanation, made his famous and contemptuous reply, “I owe the public nothing.”*

Who really was to blame? Hill, likening the panic quaintly to “an Indian ghost dance—they whirl about until they are almost crazy,” blamed the public. “Perhaps they imagine that they have a motive,” he said, “in that they see two sets of powerful interests which may be said to be clashing. Then these outsiders, without rhyme or reason, rush in on one side or the other. They could not tell you why they made their choice, but in they go, and the result is such as has been seen here for the past few days.” Harriman tried to divorce himself from any responsibility whatever, pointing out that he had stopped buying Northern Pacific stock before it started on its upward spurt (though, of course, he had at first wanted to buy), and that during the whole so-called “battle” he had withdrawn from the battlefield. Morgan blamed Harriman, and Schiff blamed Hill. There is evidence, though, that all four principals in the affair were secretly ashamed of the havoc they had caused.

And who had really won? At best, the Battle of the Giants must be considered a draw. Hill and Morgan came out with a majority of the Northern Pacific’s common stock. But Harriman and Schiff had a majority of the preferred and a majority of all the shares outstanding. One thing was certain. Morgan had finally met his match in Jacob Schiff. Never again would one man control the finances of the country. From that point on, there would be another to consider.

A few days after that terrible Black Thursday, Jim Hill appeared at the Kuhn, Loeb offices and asked to see his old friend Schiff. Felix Warburg came out to meet Hill and explained that his father-in-law was temporarily

indisposed. “How is he?” Hill wanted to know. “Not very happy,” said Felix politely. “Is he still mad at me?” asked Hill. “Yes,” said Felix, “I would say so.” Hill, with another little wave of his hand, said, “Oh, Schiff takes these things too seriously.”

A week to the day after the collapse of the market, Jacob Schiff, gently glorying in his new position as Morgan’s equal, wrote Morgan a long and masterly letter, full of delicate irony, in which, almost apologetically, he called Hill a double-crossing liar. He had, Schiff wrote, perhaps misconstrued Hill’s words and intent; for this he would beg to be forgiven. The letter concluded on this note of almost fawning suavity:

I trust you will accept my assurance that nothing was further on the part of Union Pacific interests than to do aught meant to be antagonistic to you or your firm, and that, as far as my partners and I are concerned, we have at all times wished, as we continue to do, to be permitted to aid in maintaining your personal prestige, so well deserved. You will find Union Pacific interests, and certainly my firm and myself, entirely ready to do anything in reason that you may ask or suggest, so that permanent conditions shall be created which shall be just to all interests and not bear within them the seed of future strife, discord, and possible disaster.

Trusting, then, dear Mr. Morgan, that you will understand the spirit in which this letter is written, and hoping that the rest of your stay abroad may be pleasant and not interrupted by any unsatisfactory events, I am, with assurances of esteem,

Yours most faithfully,
Jacob H. Schiff

Schiff was never a man to make an enemy when he could keep a friend, especially a friend who could be useful to him. And so it is not surprising to see him, a few weeks later, writing a similarly conciliatory letter to “My dear Hill,” saying:

It made me unhappier than I can tell you to find myself, for the first time in fifteen years, in a position where you and I could not go together arm in arm.... I believe that your own interests and those we represent can be knitted together so tightly and profitably that before

long we shall all feel that what had to be gone through during the past few weeks was not for naught.

He was quite right, and Morgan agreed. Soon after the panic, Morgan formed the Northern Securities Holding Company to protect Hill's interests, and, in a gesture that Morgan must have made with great difficulty, he asked Harriman to sit on the board and have a vote in the new company. It was Harriman's first admission into the councils of J. P. Morgan, and, for a while at least, everyone was happy. Harriman and Hill, it turned out, never did have anything against each other personally. They greeted each other cheerfully with "Hullo, Ned!" and "Hullo, Jim!" Jim Hill showed how much he continued to admire Schiff by sending Schiff not one, but two portraits of himself, whereupon Jacob wrote back: "There are few men with whom I have come into contact during my business career for whom I feel as great and real attachment as I do for you."

Schiff always seemed to have the last word. Long after the battling giants had shaken hands and made up, Schiff wrote to his friend Sir Ernest Cassel saying how "very much attached" he had become to "dear Morgan," and how "very obliging and considerate towards me" Morgan had been, "especially since the Northern Pacific Affair. He understood very well that it was his interests that had brought us into conflict." Schiff, who had proved himself a powerful fighter, was also an effective peacemaker.

During the Northern Pacific Affair Otto Kahn's name had been mentioned merely as one of Schiff's "lieutenants." But while he may not have played a major role in the episode, he had been watching very carefully from the sidelines. Kahn always insisted that Jacob Schiff taught him everything he knew, and Kahn must have learned his lessons well. A few years after the panic, Kahn, in a brisk battle at Duveen's, was able to capture a Franz Hals painting from the next-highest bidder for \$500,000. The man he had outbid was J. P. Morgan.

"The Battle of the Giants" was watched by Kuhn, Loeb's founder, old Solomon Loeb, from a distance and with stunned amazement. He had never trusted railroads, and the scope of what his son-in-law was doing was beyond him. It had been two years since he had been inside the Kuhn, Loeb offices. He had developed a sad cast to his blue eyes, and had become

increasingly preoccupied with his health. Whenever a disease was mentioned in his presence, he would nod and say miserably, “*Ja*, I have also had that one.” (Once, after the family doctor had treated Betty for a complaint, the doctor went downstairs to inform Solomon of his wife’s condition. As he was about to utter his familiar statement, the doctor raised his hand and said, “Mr. Loeb, I assure you that this is something you have *not* had.”) Solomon loved to have Betty fuss over him, and was jealous of every moment she failed to spend with him. She played the piano for him in the afternoons; but he was even jealous of her absorption in the music and would interrupt the playing to say, “Betty, I don’t know why, but I have the strangest pain here.” And she would break off playing to tend to him.

At their camp in the Adirondacks, his sensitive skin suffered from prickly heat, and she would lay him down and, at the age of seventy, powder him like a baby. She also consoled him with enormous meals; they became two plump little old people who worried over each other endlessly. Betty had developed diabetes in her fifties, and was told that she must not fast on Yom Kippur. Still, she thought she *ought* to, and so developed a tactic which, she felt, satisfied three things: doctor’s orders, her son-in-law Jacob’s orthodox views, and her appetite. On Yom Kippur she would not go to the dining table but had a series of little meals brought to her on the porch of the house—this way feeling that she was not fasting and not really eating either.

One summer Solomon saw Betty reach for another serving of Nesselrode pie which her diabetic diet forbade her to have, and cried, “Betty, don’t!” But the indomitable Betty, whose will was a match for her husband’s any day, said, “I don’t care if it costs me ten years of my life. I’ll take a second helping of this excellent dessert.” With a little smile, she did and within a few hours she was dead. After her death Solomon was a husk of a man. He died a little more than a year later, in 1903.

- * Which had given Jacob Schiff his first contact in New York.
- * In those days the New York Stock Exchange was open on Saturdays.
- * It was an era when it was fashionable for the rich and mighty to disparage the public. In 1883 William H. Vanderbilt had uttered his famous “The public be damned!”

“DER REICHE LEWISOHN”

Adolph Lewisohn’s father had a curious theory. He told his son that the Passover matzoths, or *Afikomen*, had, when properly blessed, a special virtue: if a bit of this unleavened bread was tossed into the sea, it would calm the water. Adolph’s father said he knew that this was true because he had tried it once, and it had worked. When Adolph was eighteen in 1867, crossing the Atlantic to America, he had carried one of these blessed matzoths with him. The ship hit a storm, and young Adolph struggled to the rail and cast his *Afikomen* on the water. Nothing happened. It was one of his last attempts to conform to his father’s orthodoxy. It was symbolic of his break with the past.

Adolph had been born in Hamburg, the youngest of seven children of Sam and Julie Lewisohn. He was a plump, silent, introverted child, devoted to his mother. One afternoon when he was six years old he was sitting with her when she suddenly said that she felt a little dizzy. Within a few minutes she was dead. Soon afterward his father remarried and started a second family. There were soon four more sons. Adolph, the outcast, had in the meantime been ordered by his father to visit the synagogue every day for a full year to say his *Kaddish*, the orphan’s prayer.

The senior Lewisohn operated a business that had been in the family since 1740, dealing in wool, bristles, horsehair, ostrich and other ornamental feathers, and, eventually, in metals. Sam Lewisohn was proud of his reputation as a businessman and of the fact that he was known locally as “*der reiche Lewisohn*”—*the rich Lewisohn*. He was also proud of the Lewisohn pedigree, which he traced back to 1609 when the Lewisohns came to Germany from Holland. Sam’s mother had been Fanny Haarbleicher, the daughter, Sam pointed out, “of a very good English

Jewish family.” And *her* mother’s father was Solomon Goldschmidt, a London financier.

Sam was a strong-willed little man. In 1848 he became concerned about a Parisian milliner who appeared to have defaulted on payment for a shipment of feathers. Sam set out for Paris to collect the bill in person. News traveled slowly in those days, and he had not heard about the Revolution that had broken out in France (which was one reason why Paris ladies were not buying ostrich-plumed hats that year). As he reached the frontier, he was warned repeatedly to stay out of France. But he continued on, in the face of hordes of escaping refugees, into Paris, right up to the barricades. When challenged, he cried out, “*Je suis un Républicain d’Hamburg!*” Since Hamburg was recognized as a free city, he was permitted through the battle lines and went on to the milliner’s shop, where he demanded and got payment of his bill.

He was a martinet when it came to disciplining his children, and Adolph had a dreadful respect for his father that was a long way from love. The German backhanded slap was his father’s favorite form of punishment, and young Adolph received many of these. When he was seven, still during the year of mourning his father had imposed upon him, his older sister was married in a gay ceremony. At the wedding a traditional collection was taken for the poor, and young Adolph made a comment about collections that was, for his age, unusually perceptive (and, for a future philanthropist, interesting). He said he had heard that in Christian churches and cathedrals there were two kinds of alms boxes. Those of solid wood earned pennies, but those with glass sides—where donations were visible—always yielded larger coins and bills. He was slapped for bringing up “churches and cathedrals” at a Jewish wedding.

Once he ate lamb chops and cream puffs at the same meal, which was against the orthodox dietary law, and was slapped for that. He took lonely walks in the fields outside Hamburg. He picked wildflowers which he pressed between books, and built a little glass herbarium, planted with mosses and herbs, and placed it in his bedroom window overlooking the canal. One day it was gone. His father had decided it was “not manly.”

He tried to please his father by taking an interest in the business. During the Sabbath—from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday—the Lewisohn offices were closed, but after sunset Saturday business commenced again in an

informal sort of way, upstairs in the parlor. Here Adolph's father and uncles and clerks gathered to discuss the week's transactions, and to receive an occasional visiting salesman. On one of these evenings a salesman from Russia arrived selling bristles. Russian bristles were an important item for export, and Adolph's uncle, after examining samples in various colors, placed an order for bristles in white, yellow, gray; and black. Adolph, who had been quietly listening, said suddenly, "In New York they won't want black bristles." He was thereupon dealt another slap by his father. Later his father said, "You were right about the black bristles, but that makes no difference. You have no right to speak out against your uncles and elders."

Adolph was nearsighted, and heavy-lensed spectacles were prescribed. The glasses, at least, protected him from the slaps, and he seemed to withdraw behind them into a private world of worry and hope. At the age of ten he had heard terrible news. His dead mother whom he had loved so much had suffered from "melancholia." Now one of his older sisters showed the same disturbing symptoms, and had to be carefully watched. Adolph himself began to nourish a secret fantasy—a dream of escape, and travel, and of riches with which to buy treasures that even "*der reiche Lewisohn*" could never afford, riches that could buy not only freedom from the black cobbled streets of Hamburg but something that Adolph began to see as a kind of grandeur and stature. The squinting, overweight boy became, in his own mind, a secret potentate.

Aside from the Scriptures, there was little to read in the Lewisohn house. But there were newspapers of sorts. There were two Hamburg dailies—*Der Freischütz* and *Nachrichten*—but these were not sold outright; they were loaned or rented. The papers were delivered, read for an hour or so, then picked up again and carried on to another family. Naturally, when each paper arrived at its appointed hour, the senior member of the family—Adolph's father in his case—got to read it first. By the time it got to Adolph it was usually time for it to be collected again.

An exception to this publishing practice was *Die Fremdenliste*, "the list of strangers." This stayed in the house because it was not so much a newspaper as an advertising handout paid for by various Hamburg hotels, listing the commercial and other travelers who arrived from out of town. At first glance, *Die Fremdenliste* may not seem much more exciting than reading a telephone book, but for Adolph Lewisohn poring over the list of

strangers had a special fascination. The strangers had strange names, and they came from exotic ports, and he could let his imagination go and create exciting histories and daring exploits for them all. The strangers became his intimates as he fleshed them out and let them populate his waking and sleeping thoughts. Many were titled personages, and *Die Fremdenliste* carefully listed each arrival according to his status, wealth, and importance. Royalty came first—the visiting kings, princes, and dukes. Then came courtiers and those with powerful royal connections. Then came religious titles, then generals and counts and barons. After these came the *rentiers*, the landed gentry who lived on their incomes. And last of all, at the bottom of the list, were placed the “*Kaufmänner*” or merchants. Adolph, the merchant’s son, set his sights on the princely category.

At times *Die Fremdenliste* published bits of general news. Here, for instance, Adolph learned of the rich gold fields that had been discovered in California. He also read how fellow Germans and fellow Jews like the Seligmans were becoming titans of American finance. And the Seligmans had originally been simple country folk, not even successful merchants!

At the age of fifteen Adolph went to work for his father. He was sent on a two weeks’ business trip to Frankfurt and Zurich, his first taste of travel outside Hamburg and, as it turned out, his first real taste of the kind of grandeur he had dreamed about. Returning from Frankfurt he made an illicit side trip to Wiesbaden, one of the grand spas of the day, and one starry night he stood outside the window of the great gambling casino and watched women in furs and jewels and men in monocles and cutaways move slowly through the gilded and mirrored rooms under heavy chandeliers where, as he said later, “to me everything looked beautiful!” A few months later his father sent him on another business mission to Schleswig-Holstein, and from Schleswig he was required to visit a small island off the coast, a half-hour’s boat trip away, his first sea voyage. He was seasick both over and back, and when he returned to Germany, he said, “I was seasick, but I shouldn’t have been because I’m going to America.” His father laughed at him.

Adolph’s father had sent an agent to New York to be the firm’s sales representative, but it turned out that the man was not as trustworthy as the senior Lewisohn had supposed. Two of Adolph’s older brothers, Julius and

Leonard, were sent over to replace him and soon wrote home to Germany asking for another brother.

Adolph's father knew that Adolph had "liberal tendencies," and Sam had the usual parental fear that, once in America, Adolph would abandon orthodoxy. But at last Sam consented. Adolph was to sail on the Hamburg-America packet ship *Hammonia*, and all the way down the Elbe on the tender his father lectured him on the importance of keeping the dietary laws, asking him to swear never to give up the tenets of his faith, and Adolph "tried to promise." As young Adolph started up the gangplank, his father became terribly agitated and cried out, "It's natural that you should be upset too, my son!" But Adolph wasn't a bit upset. And when his father gripped his hand and said, "If you'll promise not to cry, I won't cry either," Adolph Lewisohn stood for several minutes, trying to cry to please his father, but, as he wrote later, "I could not dissemble. To me, there was nothing to cry about." It was the happiest moment of his life.

When he got to New York—it was 1867, just two years after his contemporary, Jacob Schiff, had made his first trip to America—Adolph wrote home to his father:

The city leaves nothing to be desired.... Everything is as grandiose and animated as possible. Life here not only corresponds to my expectations but even exceeds them. We have very nice rooms, which, of course, cost also a nice sum of money (\$55.00 a week with board, on Broadway). The business hours are from eight o'clock in the morning until half-past six in the evening without interruption, but then you have the evening for yourself.... I like this very much, as in Hamburg I mingled with strangers. I am getting along quite nicely with my English.

He also assured his father that, "of course," the firm did not do business on the Sabbath. It was an assurance he would be required to repeat up to the time of his father's death, even though, in fact, the opposite was true.

"What I did resent," he wrote in an unpublished memoir dictated when he was an old man, "was that my father was so bent on the strict orthodox forms that he insisted on our devoting ourselves entirely to that way of life, letting everything else go that might interfere with it." In New York the Lewisohn boys bought some lard for export to Hamburg. When old Sam

Lewisohn heard of this transaction, he cabled the boys with orders to dispose of the lard immediately; he would not accept it, and he refused to deal in it. He could, and did, deal in pigs' bristles because bristles were inedible. But lard was edible and violated kosher restrictions. Sabbath strictures stated that the orthodox Jew could carry nothing on his person except his clothing, unless it was carried within an enclosed courtyard. Sam Lewisohn had no courtyard, and, as Sam pointed out, since the city gates were not closed on Saturday, the entire city could not be considered a courtyard, either. This meant that nothing could be carried, not even a handkerchief. If one of his children needed a handkerchief on the Sabbath, Sam said the handkerchief must be knotted about his arm—worn, in other words, as part of his clothing.

Sam Lewisohn would not even allow the key to his house to be carried on the Sabbath. Since some coming and going was necessary, and since Sam did not like to ring his own doorbell, the key to the house was ritually placed on a little ledge outside the door, next to the lock, on Friday, so it could be used on Saturday without carrying it. Adolph could never understand why his father bothered to lock the door in the first place.

No fire could be lit in the house between sundown Friday and sundown Saturday. In the pregas days some of Sam's Jewish neighbors in Hamburg brought hot dishes to a community stove on Friday, where they would be kept warm for Saturday. But since this involved carrying—from public stove to the house—on the Sabbath, Sam would not permit it, and the Lewisohns ate only cold dishes on Saturday, even in the coldest winter, in a cold house. "Every Saturday and every holiday morning," wrote Adolph, "saw us all at the synagogue. I suppose Jesus Christ did the same, because the New Testament tells us that he drove the money-changers from the Temple and that at times he preached in the synagogue." He added, somewhat slyly: "As a pious Jew, he must have attended the synagogue, although I suppose that toward the end of his life the authorities would not let him preach. Perhaps if he were to appear today and preach as radically as he did then, he would not be allowed in the more conservative Christian churches."

From his study of his *Fremdenliste*, Adolph had observed how German society of his day had become rigidly stratified. Unless ennobled by a "von," no businessman, merchant, or professional man was *hoffähig*, or

received at court. It was a stony rule that the nobility and the common people never mixed, nor spoke to, nor even acknowledged each other—nor was it as simple as that. The nobility was stratified within itself, as was the nonnobility. Each German belonged to his *Kreis*, his little group, and any intercourse between these groups was not only not done, it was considered dangerous. Mingling of the classes invited disorder, a state the German feared the most. The wife of a doctor did not speak to the wife of an architect; the architect's wife did not speak to the merchant's. This continued down the many rungs of the social ladder until the wives of tailors refused to speak to wives of shoemakers. The Jew, of course, occupied his own isolated position, and Adolph, who wanted friends almost as much as he wanted to be rich, came to America believing that a preoccupation with Jewish ritual and “feelings of Jewishness” only intensified the Jew's isolation from the world around him, and made him seem—and feel—more alien and aloof.

In New York, once, arguing with a friend who said, “Jewishness is drawn in with our mother's milk,” Adolph replied with a smile, “Well, that doesn't apply to me. I had a Christian wet nurse. Perhaps that explains why I get along with the Christians better than you do, and why I have so many Christian friends.”

“I could never see,” he said on another occasion, “why it should be considered *bad* to be a Jew. Some Jews are noisy and offensive. So are some gentiles. Noisy, offensive gentiles should be avoided. So should noisy and offensive Jews.”

When he encountered anti-Semitism, he liked to analyze it in a businesslike way. As a fifteen-year-old in Hamburg, he had seen a performance of *The Merchant of Venice*, and had been startled by, and “did not approve” of, the portrayal of Shylock in the play. He proceeded to make a careful dissection of Shylock's character and behavior. “I could not understand why Shylock should be regarded as a mean character,” he wrote. “Shylock had not asked for credit from anybody or committed any wrong or crime. He was simply living his own life with his family.” Then, said Adolph,

Along came some Christian gentlemen who wanted a loan, and they applied to Shylock who must have been pretty good at thrift as he had

plenty of ready money. One of these gentlemen proposed to borrow a large sum and Shylock drew a queer contract, but Antonio did not have to sign if he did not want to agree to it. Of course, Shylock could not have been entirely sane or he would not have exacted the cutting off of a pound of flesh. That certainly was not good business, as he would not have benefitted by it.

Later on in the play, Lewisohn pointed out,

Shylock was offered three or five times the amount of the loan and could have made a small fortune out of his contract. If he had done this, there might have been some reason for making him out a bad character. But Shylock's sense of honor was stronger than his desire to gain. They had treated him cruelly, taking his daughter and through her had stolen his property. Considering what it meant to be a Jew at that time, to have his daughter marry outside his faith, Shylock's feeling of outrage and revenge was not unnatural.

Then Lewisohn added: "I think that history tells us that the Jews did not always act as impractically as Shylock did in the play."

Adolph drew a business moral from Shylock's story: never to make a "queer contract," and never to extract an excessive profit from a trade. In 1873 he was still an employee of his father and his older brothers, but he occasionally had a chance to buy and sell on his own. In the summer of that year he was sent back to Europe on a feathers-and-bristle-buying assignment. He had wanted to sail on the fancy new Hamburg-America liner *Schiller*, one of the most luxurious of its day. Reluctantly, however, he decided that "it looked better for business" if he took an older, less showy ship, and so he chose the *Hammonia* again. It was a lucky decision. The *Schiller* went down in mid-Atlantic with no surviving passengers. Another passenger aboard the *Hammonia* who had changed his booking from the *Schiller* was Senator Carl Schurz. Adolph used the booking coincidence as an excuse to introduce himself to Schurz (a former major general in the Union Army, later to become Secretary of the Interior under Hayes), and made a friend.

Adolph disembarked at Plymouth, went up to London to visit the bristle market, and made plans to continue on to Hamburg. But he was still an

inexperienced traveler. After buying his rail and steamer tickets and paying his hotel bill, he found that he had no money left to pay for meals on his journey. On the train to Dover he struck up a conversation with “a Christian gentleman” who mentioned that he had meant to buy some chamois gloves while in London. Adolph replied that, as it so happened, he had bought several pairs, which he would be happy to sell. He sold them, and at a little profit “which seemed fair, since I was by then the exporter of the gloves from London, and the gentleman would have had to pay considerably more in Paris,” and the money was enough to feed him until he got to Hamburg. Like Shylock’s, Adolph’s “sense of honor was stronger than his desire to gain.”

Adolph Lewisohn was then twenty-four, and he had not seen his father in six years. When he arrived in Hamburg, it was a Saturday, and when he entered his house, his father, in his long Sabbath robes, rose to meet him and cuffed him soundly on the ear. Adolph had been carrying his valises.

“Sometimes, in those days,” he wrote, “my dreams seemed a long way from coming true.”

THE POOR MAN'S METAL

Copper, “the ugly duckling of metals,” had long been considered the poor man’s metal, despised for its very abundance. Because there was so much copper in the world, it was one of the world’s least expensive and most neglected metals, used as the basis for the cheapest coins and utensils. There was copper all over the Western Hemisphere, from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, and the thrifty Mormons ignored one of the largest copper lodes of all, just outside Salt Lake City; no one bothered to put money into the relatively expensive recovery process to turn crude into finished ore. The dawning age of electricity, however, was beginning to change all this.

Adolph Lewisohn first became interested in copper in the 1870’s when, with a visiting cousin from Germany, he made a bristle-selling trip to Boston. While there he watched a demonstration by a young man named Thomas A. Edison. Edison claimed he could record human voices on little metal spools. Adolph spoke into Mr. Edison’s contraption and, to his amazement, heard his voice played back. Edison then told Adolph that the day was not far off when voices would be transmitted across continents by wire—copper wire. Talk such as this began to make copper shares fluctuate wildly on the market.

At that point most American copper was mined in the Lake Superior region of Michigan, and in 1877 the American market found itself glutted with copper and a great deal of the metal was sold for export to Europe at a low price. Then, in 1878, there was a sudden copper shortage and the price of copper rose sharply, so high that American manufacturers were having to import cheaper copper from European mines. This unusual situation gave Adolph and his brothers an unusual idea.

All copper imported to the United States from Europe was subject to five cents per pound duty. But there was a loophole in the customs regulations, and American-mined copper—such as the hundreds of tons of the stuff that had been sold cheaply to Europe the year before—could be *reimported* without the payment of any duty at all. There were a few technicalities. In order to be reimported duty-free, American copper was to be shipped back to this country in the same casks in which it had been shipped out, as proof of its American origin. Also, the European seller of this copper was to provide a certificate saying that the reimported metal had, indeed, originated in America. In a fast-moving market, after a shipment had changed hands several times, certification was not easy to get.

The copper Adolph and his brothers ordered carried no such certification. Also, it was no longer in its original casks; it had been uncrated and repacked. But, even with the cost of shipping, it was cheaper per ton than copper available in the United States. The ingots, to be sure, were stamped with the names of the Michigan mines, and perhaps—the brothers hoped—this fact would be sufficient to satisfy customs. Rather like American tourists who have overspent their quota and pray that customs won't poke too deeply in their luggage, the Lewisohn boys waited for their copper to arrive praying that customs would not hew too closely to the regulations. It was a gamble, and it worked. The shipment passed customs untaxed, and the boys sold the copper quickly.

A year later, with their growing reputation as copper factors, the boys were offered a chance to buy their first mine in Butte, Montana. The price was low, and Adolph set out for Montana to look over the situation. There was plenty of copper in the hills around Butte, but much of the ore was of low grade and, furthermore, there was no way to get copper out of the area except by mule team, which was prohibitively expensive. Still, Butte was a wide-open town—Montana had not yet become a state—and was full of eager speculators. Adolph bought up a claim called the Colusa mine, and formed a company in Butte called the Montana Copper Company.

Now the Lewisohns were owners of a mine which produced a product they could not ship. They went to work. The first person they approached was Henry Villard, president of the Northern Pacific Railroad, whom they asked to build a line from Helena into Butte. Villard agreed, but there was a sizable string attached. If the Lewisohns wanted a line built into Butte, they

would have to guarantee large freight shipments of ore out—guarantees the brothers were not at all sure they would be able to keep. Next, they approached Jacob Schiff's sometime friend, James J. Hill, head of the Great Northern, and asked him to build the Great Northern into Butte by way of Great Falls. Great Falls was important because there was water power there, which the Lewisohns figured they could use to set up a smelting and reduction works. Hill also agreed, but only after extracting additional guarantees. The Lewisohns now had \$75,000 tied up in one mine which was yielding them no income. The brothers were, Adolph confessed, "very nervous."

Their ability to persuade railroads to reroute their lines was only the beginning of a larger problem—how to meet those guarantees, which actually presented a double challenge: first, to find sufficient ore to make up the guaranteed tonnages and then, if possible, to ship even more. In their contracts with the two railroads, the Lewisohns had clauses to the effect that the more ore they shipped, the lower the freight rate would be. (Since then, shipping laws have been passed that give small manufacturers an even chance, but in those days the biggest shippers got the best breaks.)

While the railroad tracks were being laid, Adolph came up with one of his best ideas. He looked at all the low-grade ore dumped from the Colusa in giant slag heaps. Considered unsalable, it was being discarded as waste. But, Adolph calculated, if all those tons of waste were shipped by freight—somewhere, anywhere—they would give him his guaranteed tonnage and mean that his high-grade ore could be shipped much more cheaply. The notion reminded him of something he had done as a boy. When he made his first selling trip for his father, to Frankfurt, he had been embarrassed, checking into hotels, by the tiny store of personal effects he was carrying with him. He had bought a large suitcase and filled it with rocks.

Adolph's rock idea, applied to mining, was simple enough, but nobody had thought of it before. Mining engineers had studied the problem, but it took a boy from Hamburg, whose only experience with digging had been in his window-ledge herbarium, to come up with a solution.

His idea of shipping supposedly worthless low-grade ore turned out to have even more value than its worth as a decoy, since there *was* a market for low-grade copper ore in England. Here again, the cost of shipping had always been considered too high. Still thinking of his valise full of rocks,

Adolph expanded upon the idea. Suppose, when the railroad was built, the low-grade ore were to be shipped to a West Coast port—San Francisco, Portland, or Seattle. Suppose, from there, it could be loaded on a ship for little or no cost—as ballast. Suppose, from there, it traveled around Cape Horn to New York and suppose, at last, from there it could be loaded on another ship—as ballast again—for England. When the Northern Pacific tracks reached Butte, this was exactly what the Lewisohn brothers did.

The boys were on their way.

FURTHER ADVENTURES UNDERGROUND

To a large number of the crowd, they were simply—and rather sniffily—known as “The Googs.” “Are they asking the Googs?” people would ask if someone was having a party. The Seligmans acted as though they were coming down in the world when James’s daughter, Florette, married a Goog. (After all, another of James’s daughters had married a *Nathan*.) The Guggenheims, in fact, never seemed quite to “fit in” with the crowd, no matter what they did. They always seemed just a bit outside of things. There are several possible reasons for this. For one thing, the Guggenheims were Swiss, not German. For another, they were quite opposed, in their financial philosophy, to men like the Seligmans (though they were closer in their thinking to Jacob Schiff). But the best reason for their special position, perhaps, is that the Guggenheims as a family group managed to make more money—in barely twenty years’ time—than any other individual in the United States, if not the world, with the possible exception of John D. Rockefeller. (It is very likely that the Guggenheims made more money than Rockefeller. But when one deals with hundred-million-dollar fortunes, accurate figures become very hard to get.)

Meyer Guggenheim was well past fifty before such spectacular prospects began to present themselves to him, though the family’s lace and embroidery business in Philadelphia had not done at all badly. By the 1880’s he and his sons ran several small companies, including their own lace-making factories in Switzerland and their own importing and distributing company. Meyer was rich. But he had still not reached his goal, “One million dollars for each boy”—and there were seven of these—when

a friend named Charles H. Graham came to talk to him about mining shares. The curious thing about that visit is that, for all its profound effect on the Guggenheim lives and fortunes, no one today is sure what transpired.* Graham, a Quaker, operated a grocery store in Philadelphia and had been speculating in Western mining lands. Perhaps he went to see Meyer to sell him some mining shares. More likely, Graham owed Meyer some money and persuaded Meyer to accept mining shares in lieu of cash. In any case, in return for a consideration of either \$5,000 or \$25,000 (there are two conflicting reports), Meyer, who had never been west of Pittsburgh, became a one-third owner of two lead-and-silver mines called the “A.Y.” and the “Minnie” outside Leadville, Colorado.

Since he was always more interested in finance than in management, Joseph Seligman had been content to leave his mining interests in the hands of custodians who, as in the case of Mr. Bohm, often turned out to be untrustworthy. Perhaps Meyer Guggenheim had learned what not to do from Joseph. In any case, he immediately set off for Leadville to inspect his new holdings. He cannot have expected to find much because he brought with him, as insurance, a large stock of Guggenheim laces and embroidery. When a Leadville merchant bought some of his goods, Meyer muttered, “That’s about all I’ll get out of Leadville.” And, sure enough, both the A.Y. and the Minnie, though they descended from a mountainside ten thousand feet above sea level, were flooded with seepage from the Arkansas River which raced nearby. (Meyer determined this by dropping a stone down the shaft of each mine and waiting for the splash, an experiment so simple that it would not have occurred to a Seligman.) To find out what was in them, they would have to be pumped out or, as Meyer put it, “un-watered.” He installed pumping equipment.

During the next few months, more and more of Meyer’s money was required to keep the pumps going, and by August, back in Philadelphia for a fresh supply of laces and embroidery to help support the pumps, he had very nearly abandoned hope when he had a telegram from Leadville. It read: “You have a rich strike.” The A.Y. mine, un-watered at last, was yielding fifteen ounces of silver—or nearly twenty dollars’ worth—per ton, along with considerable copper ore. The amount of silver in the mine was encouraging—as much as \$180,000 worth of pure silver from a single stope. At the same time, the preponderance of copper was disappointing.

Immediately, Meyer called all his seven sons to Leadville, including Benjamin, who was still an undergraduate at Columbia, and William, who was barely in his teens; the two were told to finish their studies locally and to learn some practical metallurgy on the spot. Meyer and the older boys would perform purchasing and marketing tasks and, above all, devote themselves to finding a method of smelting copper ore that was not exorbitantly costly.

This did not take long, thanks to a circumstance even luckier than Mr. Graham's visit. Of several existing processes, one that had been developed but had still not been tried was the brain child of R. J. Gatling, the inventor of the rapid-fire machine gun. The financing of the Gatling process of ore recovery had been turned down by J. P. Morgan, but there was one young, little-known, lone-wolf speculator who believed in it. His name was Bernard Baruch. On Baruch's advice, Meyer gambled on the Gatling process, which almost immediately lowered the price of refining copper to a practical seven or eight dollars a ton.

One of the great "troubles" with the Guggenheims, socially, in the New York crowd they soon entered was that nearly all nineteenth-century fortunes up to that point had been built systematically, and possessed a kind of inevitable logic. But Meyer Guggenheim's money had been made in such an erratic way—from stove polish to lye to spices to Irish linen and Swiss embroidery, leaping from one business about which he knew little to another about which he knew even less, and landing, at last, with a rich strike in silver and copper from a waterlogged mine shaft. There were rumors that Meyer was a little unbalanced, and had succeeded not by his brains but by fool luck. But the consistent element in Meyer Guggenheim's career was that he was always essentially a middleman, refining and marketing a product made by someone else.

Just as he had succeeded in improving an existing brand of stove polish, he had now succeeded in improving the smelting of copper. As he went about liquidating his lace business, he continued in this pattern. He decided to concentrate not on the production-ownership end of the copper business but, as he saw it, on the part of the business where the money really lay—in smelting and refining.

Meyer's theory was very like one held by another underground expert of the day, John Davison Rockefeller. Rockefeller never deigned to own an oil

well, considering drilling companies far too risky and preferring to leave them to lesser speculators. He liked to own refineries. The well owners then had to bring their oil to him, which he bought at the lowest price (which got lower the more the producers produced, and which hit bottom when overproduction set in). Similarly, whenever Meyer bought copper lands, he bought them primarily for the purpose of setting up smelters; he then either kept his mining ownerships as subsidiaries or sold them to buy more smelters.

By 1882 Meyer's holdings were large enough, according to one biographer, to "enlist and hold the attention of his sons," who had been working for him all along. Meyer formed M. Guggenheim's Sons for this purchase, in which each of his seven boys was an equal partner. Meyer began lending his sons money to go out and buy and build smelters. In 1888 the boys bought their first smelter in Pueblo, Colorado, for \$500,000, and soon they had another in Mexico. The profits they divided were enough to hold anybody's attention. In 1890 the Minnie mine alone was worth \$14,556,000. A year later the Guggenheims had made so much money that they decided to form a trust of their own, consolidating about a dozen of their refining operations under the name Colorado Smelting & Refining Company.

The first issue of stock in this new company was to have been underwritten by J. & W. Seligman & Company. But at the last minute Isaac Seligman (whose family had not yet become connected to the Guggenheims by marriage) backed out. He did not think the issue would sell.

It did, however. In 1895 the Guggenheims bought a huge refinery in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and four years later a separate Guggenheim Exploration Company was formed, called Guggenex, which very quickly led the brothers into copper and silver mines in Nevada, Utah, and New Mexico, gold mines in Alaska, tin mines in Bolivia, diamond mines in Africa, more copper mines in Mexico, copper and nitrates in Chile, and even a rubber plantation in the Belgian Congo.

By 1900 the Guggenheims had made so much money that the two youngest brothers, Benjamin and William, decided to give the family enterprises less attention. Having been assured that, for sentimental reasons, they would continue to partake of the profits, both boys retired, leaving digging, smelting, and exploration to Isaac, Daniel, Murry, Solomon, and

Simon. Meyer, meanwhile, according to William Guggenheim, “kept books of small neat figures,” enjoying the fact that each new entry “improved his financial status.”

He had laid the foundation for what is now the United States copper industry. Such giants as Kennecott, Braden, and Anaconda Copper all had their genesis in Meyer Guggenheim’s operations, and if Mr. Graham had not stopped by Meyer’s store, none of it might have happened.

As news of the Lewisohns’ and Guggenheims’ mining successes reached the Seligmans in New York, their old enthusiasms for adventures underground were rekindled. Not that they had ever really died down. Dreams of hitting a bonanza had kept them sending good money after bad in any number of mining ventures. They had bought mines, despite their lack of knowledge of the productive end of mining. They had financed operations they had never seen. At the height of the Panic of 1873, the most severe the country had ever known, the Seligmans cheerfully invested in a totally worthless gold mine, the Oneida, and went on holding a number of other valueless mining shares. But mining shares were becoming nearly as glamorous as railroads, and the Seligmans were unable to believe that they would not soon find a winner. In the 1870’s Joseph had written to his brothers: “I want no more mines at any price! Even for nothing! As the assessments* are always the worst!” But of course he had gone right on buying mines. In fact, one of the greatest credits to the Seligman firm is that it was able to remain solid and afloat, without visible financial injury, despite its many mining losses.

After Joseph Seligman’s death Jesse became head of the New York firm and, perhaps because Joseph had had bad luck in Montana, Jesse determined that he would have better. There was not much logic behind this decision, but there had been little of that commodity evident in any of the brothers’ mining operations. Jesse’s Montana enterprise was called the Gregory Consolidated Mining Company, and was located southwest of Helena. “It sounds very promising,” he wrote to his brothers—without bothering to visit Helena; the mine’s impressive name satisfied him. He purchased a sizable share of the Gregory, and then dispatched an expert to look at the mine—his young son Albert, who had actually studied mining engineering. “We shall not trust strangers this time,” he wrote confidently,

congratulating himself that he was being smarter than Joseph, who had trusted the thieving Bohm.

Young Albert found conditions in the Montana mining regions somewhat different from those on campus. He also found the Gregory to be a mine that was operating at a heavy loss, and soon after he arrived it was unable to meet its payroll. Albert wanted to close the mine immediately, but Jesse wanted to hold on. While father and son argued by telegraph, the miners went unpaid. Finally, when salaries had not been paid for a full two months, the miners captured Albert and held him hostage. In New York there were dark rumors that the Gregory's general manager, in collusion with Albert, had staged the kidnaping as a means to keep the men working. But as soon as Jesse Seligman paid the miners' wages, Albert was released and the mine was closed. It was never worked again.

Though Jesse continued to dabble in mines, they became a taboo subject at the Seligman dinner table when Jesse's wife Henriette discovered that Jesse's balance sheet showed holdings in six different mining companies—with a total value of six dollars.

*Even Meyer himself, who died in 1905, was always hazy on the details of Mr. Graham's call.

*Sellers of mining securities often "assessed" buyers of the stock to put up additional sums of money if the cost of whatever development the stock was to pay for exceeded the original estimates. If the stockholder did not come forth with these assessments, he lost his participation.

TWILIGHT OF A BANKER

Jesse Seligman was twenty years older than Jacob Schiff, he headed the more venerable banking house, and in the 1880's the title, inherited from his brother Joseph, "New York's leading Jewish banker," undoubtedly still belonged to Jesse. He was one of the toughest, hardest-to-ruffle Seligmans, and one of the brightest. He was stockily built, with an earnest, square-jawed, homely-handsome face that seemed incapable of imposture. The *Daily Graphic* described Jesse as "cool, circumspect and conservative.... He carefully weighs all his opinions before expressing them, and his word, once given, is as good as his bond." The *Graphic* also called the head of the Seligman firm "simple almost to austerity."

Jesse was actually a more popular man in New York than his brother Joe had been. Joe's life had been pretty much all business, but Jesse had found time for considerable philanthropies. He had been one of the founders of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum, the Montefiore Home, the United Hebrew Charities, and served as a patron of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and of the American Museum of Natural History. He did a great deal to enhance the "social distinction" of the Seligman family, an eminence which families such as the Guggenheims were finding it so difficult to achieve. And so it is a particular pity that this esteemed man should have embarked, soon after his brother's death, upon a project which, though it left the Seligmans a great deal richer, left their business reputation considerably damaged.

In 1869, after ten years' building, the Suez Canal linking the Mediterranean to the Red Sea was opened, and the great "impossible" dream of Ferdinand de Lesseps had become a reality. In the years that followed, De Lesseps turned to other notions for joining places together. A great railroad from Europe to the Pacific coast of China was one. Another

was to flood the Sahara Desert from the Atlantic, and turn northwestern Africa into an inland sea. At last he turned his attention to an idea that had been considered by many governments and explorers before—a canal between the Pacific and the Caribbean at Panama.

Whether, if Joseph Seligman had been living, he would have tried to bridle his brother's enthusiasm for the De Lesseps project is a good question. Joseph always approached all new projects with some caution. But he also had a way of flinging caution to the winds and leaping boldly into schemes—railroads, tunnels—which he had originally distrusted, so perhaps he would have done just what Jesse did. Jesse, however, admitted that the Panama Canal appealed to him for sentimental reasons. He liked the idea of carving a trench through the mountains he had crossed on muleback thirty years before with his sick brother and their supply of dry goods, heading for the gold-rich land of California. Sentiment, of course, is not always a reliable business guide.

Jesse had little trouble getting the French Panama Canal Company to let J. & W. Seligman & Company handle its stock issue. In fact, the French company seemed so eager to employ the Seligmans that a curious arrangement was made. The sum of \$300,000 was paid to the Seligmans outright as a kind of extra fee, "for the privilege of using the Seligman name as patrons of the undertaking," or so it was airily explained at the time. No one had realized that the Seligman name alone had such value—\$37,500 a letter.

A stock-selling syndicate was formed, headed in America by the Seligmans, along with Drexel, Morgan & Company and Winslow, Lanier & Company. (It always delighted Jesse when he got top billing over Morgan.) In France the committee in charge of selling canal subscriptions was headed by Seligman Frères and the Banque de Paris. The initial estimate for building the canal—considered ample—was \$114 million, and the total stock issue contemplated was 600 million francs' worth.

The proposed canal would be operated by the French Government, and from the moment the De Lesseps project was announced there was a great deal of adverse criticism of it in the American press. No one wanted a European power in control of the passage. Furthermore, the United States had been negotiating on and off for many years, with Britain and various Central American countries, to build a canal across the isthmus. The route

favored had always been through Nicaragua, where a series of natural lakes and rivers provided a partial waterway, and which many early gold prospectors had used successfully to get to California. American engineers considered the Nicaragua route superior, and, in fact, an American company had been about to start digging when the Panic of 1873, and the depression following it, brought the project to a halt. Now here was presumptuous France stepping in to steal the glory from America.

When it was announced that American bankers, led by the Seligman and including Morgan, intended to back the French canal, the editorials grew angrier and more biting. Speakers rose in the House and Senate to denounce the project and the men behind it, and editors screamed of Jesse Seligman's intention of "selling America to France." Once more there were vicious hints of "an international Jewish conspiracy," and one reporter, trying to make Morgan's participation fit this notion, went so far as to say that Morgan, unable to beat them, had "decided to join the Jews."

But in a coolheaded interview for the New York *Herald*, Jesse Seligman said, "It is a private undertaking altogether, and we have every confidence that an enterprise of this kind will pay. Naturally, the United States will receive the largest share of the benefit from it. All the machinery to be used in the work of the construction will be bought here. When the scheme is fully understood and appreciated, there will be many eager to subscribe to it, but as it is, all the necessary capital is already assured."

It certainly was. With the French hero De Lesseps behind it, Panama Canal shares had no difficulty selling in France. And, though American public opinion continued to run heavily against the canal, the public also seemed to think that with men like Seligman and Morgan behind it there was money in it. So shares sold rapidly in New York as well. The initial stock issue was oversubscribed, and digging was immediately begun.

De Lesseps had determined on a sea-level canal, without locks, and for seven years he and his engineers labored against mountains and valleys and watersheds and the scourge of Panama fever and, most of all, against the extravagance and dishonesty involved in the pricing and purchasing of supplies and equipment. Suppliers and the canal's purchasing agents were in perpetual collusion, and tons of material were shipped to Panama that the company never needed and never used. The American press and public continued to grumble, and in 1884 the Frelinghuysen-Zavala Treaty was

negotiated with Nicaragua for the construction of a rival, and roughly parallel, canal. For a while it seemed as though there would be two canals.

This treaty was not ratified by the U.S. Senate, but immediately a group of private citizens in New York organized the Nicaragua Canal Association and obtained concessions to build from both Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Soon this project was being known as the “American,” and therefore “legitimate,” canal, whereas the Panama was the French, or enemy, canal. More than ever, men like the Seligmans and Morgan seemed to be at war with their own country. The more talk there was of Nicaragua, the harder Jesse Seligman worked to sell Panama.

By the time the Nicaragua group had started digging (and some distance was actually excavated before the project collapsed), De Lesseps and his friends were in serious difficulties. De Lesseps decided that he would have to build locks, and at this he struggled on for another two years. At last, after nine years’ work, \$400 million had been spent—almost four times the original estimate—and the canal was not quite one-third completed. The Panama Canal Company went under and De Lesseps was sent home to France, disgraced, to face a Parliamentary investigation. In Washington a Congressional committee was set up to find out why tens of thousands of American shareholders had lost money on the canal venture, while men like the Seligmans and Morgan, in commissions for selling the shares, had made so much.

J. Hood Wright, a Drexel, Morgan partner, was summoned to Washington, where he was interrogated by Senator Patterson, the chairman of the investigating committee. Mr. Wright artfully managed to disclaim any responsibility for the disaster. Drexel, Morgan’s role, he piously explained, was merely to “help” the Seligmans. He testified that his firm had nothing to do with the Canal Company’s purchases, expenditures, or other banking business, but he did admit that his firm had helped the Seligmans purchase the American-built Panama Railroad for the French company.

Senator Patterson wanted to determine how much pressure the banking firms had exerted to swell public confidence in, and promote, the now bankrupt company. He asked Wright, “Was not the moral and business influence of these three great banking houses given to the enterprise?”

Wright replied hedgily, “In what respect?”

“As far as affecting public opinion in the United States was concerned.”

“I presume so,” said Mr. Wright.

“Was that not sufficient, in a large degree, to mold public opinion in favor of the Panama Canal Company?” asked the Senator.

“That,” replied Wright with extreme caution, “I am not prepared to answer.”

Of course an honest answer would certainly have been “Yes.” It soon turned out that the Seligman-Morgan-Lanier alliance had gone to considerable lengths to appoint men to the American canal committee whose names would add luster and prestige to the project. The investigation unearthed the fact that Jesse Seligman had offered his old friend ex-President Grant the chairmanship of the canal committee at a salary of \$24,000 a year—which Grant could certainly have used at that point. But Grant declined the offer, and Jesse had then approached President Hayes’s Secretary of the Navy, Richard W. Thompson, who had resigned his Cabinet post to take the job. Obviously, placing a former Navy Secretary in the Canal Company was just the sort of thing Senator Patterson was talking about. Thompson’s duties for the company were partly those of a lobbyist—a man who could influence the opinion of Congress (and help persuade it to block the progress of the Nicaragua Canal Company)—and also to strengthen the “image” of the company with the American press, and to inspire the confidence of American stock purchasers.*

The investigation also disclosed that the Seligmans had more reasons than sheer altruism for working so hard for the Canal Company. They themselves had certain juicy contracts for the procurement of machinery and equipment, and, finally, that \$300,000 fee for the privilege of using the Seligman name had had certain strings attached. It had been paid “for services rendered” in influencing American public opinion in favor of the canal. The Seligmans were considered to have done their job so well that an additional \$100,000 had been paid.

When Jesse Seligman was called before the investigating committee, he proved a more straightforward witness. The entire Panama Canal undertaking, he admitted, had been badly planned and riddled with “corruption, fraud, and thievery.”

Senator Thompson was curious about some of the appointments that had been made to the canal committee, and asked Jesse, “Why was Mr.

Thompson selected as chairman? He was not a great financier, was he?”

Jesse replied, “No, but he was a great statesman and lawyer.”

“But you offered the place to General Grant. Now he was a great soldier, a popular idol, but he was not a great lawyer, or financier, or great statesman, was he?”

With a smile, according to the *Congressional Record*, Jesse began, “Well —”

Senator Geary interjected, “There may be some difference of opinion on that point.”

Sitting forward in his chair, Jesse Seligman said calmly, “General Grant was a bosom friend of mine, and I always look out for my friends.”

Jesse then admitted that he knew American sentiment had been against the Panama Canal at the outset, and he added with candor, “A committee of representative men here, identified with the Canal Company, would have the effect of creating a more favorable sentiment among the American people.”

A surprising and not unrelated fact also emerged from the investigation. Secretary Thompson may have accepted the appointment because he, like Jesse, felt obligated to look out for his friends. A few days after Joseph’s death, he had written to Jesse:

In my official capacity as Secretary of the Navy, I have had especial opportunities to understand and appreciate his [Joseph’s] character. My first intercourse with your house was had through him, in the summer of 1877, soon after the Department was placed under my charge. At that time, its financial condition was seriously embarrassed, being indebted to your house several hundred thousand dollars, which was steadily increasing on account of drafts drawn by Naval pay officers in all parts of the world, and which were accepted and paid by you in London. It was impossible to discharge the whole of this debt, or even any large proportion of it, without adding to the existing embarrassment and causing serious injury to the Service. When he came to understand this condition of affairs, he at once proposed to carry the debt to the beginning of the next fiscal year and to allow drafts to be continued until then without regard to the amount. The proposition was liberal and in the highest degree patriotic; and having

been thankfully accepted by me the Department was enabled to bridge over all its pecuniary trouble. But for this, the injury to its credit and to the Service generally might have been irreparable.

And so, unusual though it seems, the immigrant Seligman brothers, who had crossed the Atlantic in steerage only a few years before, were, for a while, personally meeting the payroll of the United States Navy. This fact Jesse was eager to get into the record.

The investigating committee eventually decided that the banking firms had been guilty of no wrongdoing, had sold the Panama Canal issues in good faith, and that a certain amount of public relations mixed with banking was excusable. But the whole Panama Canal scandal troubled Jesse, now in his sixties, who felt he had let his dead brother down. For it had been Joseph who had always insisted on “our reputation for the strictest integrity.”

What had happened to the Seligmans’ reputation was no worse than what was happening to the financial community generally. Wall Street itself had serious public-relations problems. Americans no longer spoke with admiration and respect of “the men who guide our Nation’s financial future.” Instead, the “broker tribe” had become a small and greedy band of self-interested villains, and Wall Street had become the wickedest street in the world.

Congress, at this point, decided to step in and make the canal a United States project once and for all, and once again the favored route was through Nicaragua. (Partly, this was because American engineers wanted to disassociate themselves from the French fiasco at Panama.) The Seligmans might have quietly withdrawn, with their considerable profits, from the whole canal arena. But they were too psychologically and emotionally involved to do so. And there was more to it than sentiment now. They had a certain interest in any assets (there was a railroad, for instance, and a few partially finished terminals) of the old company which could be salvaged and sold to the new U.S. company. So naturally the brothers were committed to a Panama route. They therefore embarked upon a long campaign to reverse American public opinion and discredit Nicaragua.*

While debates about canal routes were continuing in Washington, the Seligmans approached a friend of theirs, Senator Mark Hanna. A committee

called the Inter-Oceanic Commission had been appointed to study possible canal routes, and the Seligmans asked Hanna to ask the Congress to make no recommendation until the commission's report was in. Hanna agreed, and Congress, at his request, agreed to wait. Then, to the Seligmans' disappointment, the commission delivered its report—overwhelmingly favoring Nicaragua.

Now, in a costly desperation move, the Seligmans in New York and Paris approached a man named Philippe Buneau-Varilla. Buneau-Varilla has been called “the man who invented Panama,” and yet, in a sense, it was the Seligmans who invented, or helped invent, M. Buneau-Varilla. He was a suave, mustachioed little man who had first caught the attention of the Seligmans through his activities in the Dreyfus case.* To the Seligmans, M. Buneau-Varilla seemed uniquely talented when it came to shocking the public into a change of heart. By the most delightful coincidence, it turned out that Buneau-Varilla had been devoted to the idea of a canal through Panama since the age of ten, ever since hearing of De Lesseps' feat at Suez. Without hesitation, he agreed to take the job.

He arrived in the United States and immediately launched into a heavy schedule of speechmaking. Nevertheless, a few months after Buneau-Varilla's arrival, Congress voted unanimously in favor of the Nicaragua route. Now, backed by the Seligmans, Buneau-Varilla moved into high gear in a last-ditch attempt to swing the Senate. Buneau-Varilla fought so hard and made so many heated speeches that the French Foreign Minister in Washington wired Buneau-Varilla's brother in Paris, saying that Philippe's activities were embarrassing to France, and suggesting that Philippe had lost his mind. The brother hurried to America, only to discover that Philippe was out to win and would not be stopped.

An Old Testament Deity stepped in to help the Seligmans and then-chief propagandist. A volcano on the island of Saint Vincent in the West Indies erupted, killing several thousand people. Two days before that, the supposedly dead volcano of Mount Pelée erupted on Martinique, and thirty thousand people died. Nicaragua had a volcanic history. Panama did not. Buneau-Varilla suddenly remembered something he had once seen. He rushed to a stamp store and there, sure enough, was a five-peso Nicaraguan stamp depicting the smoking mountain of Momotombo. Buneau-Varilla bought ninety volcano stamps, affixed each to a letterhead, and wrote below

each: "An official witness of the volcanic activity of the isthmus of Nicaragua." He mailed one to each Senator three days before the balloting. He and the Seligmans waited. The Senate declared in favor of Panama with only eight dissenting votes. The Seligmans cheered.

Bunau-Varilla then bought enough volcano stamps for the House of Representatives, and soon the House too had reversed itself. But there were new troubles. The Isthmus of Panama was then a part of Colombia, and Colombia now changed her mind about granting a new right of way. Bunau-Varilla began applying pressure, and certain sums of money began finding their way into Colombian officials' hands. Colombia seemed about to change her mind, but then voted not to ratify the canal treaty. "There is nothing left," Bunau-Varilla explained to the Seligmans, "but to have Panama secede from Colombia. That will mean a revolution." James Seligman wanted to know, "How much would a revolution cost?"

That would, of course, depend. Bunau-Varilla rented a suite at the Waldorf-Astoria and invited a group of would-be secessionists to a meeting there. The cost of a revolution was the chief topic on the agenda. The Panamanians insisted that they needed at least six million dollars to pay for their guerrillas. Bunau-Varilla hurried to the Seligmans, who said that six million was a bit too high. Bunau-Varilla returned with the Seligmans' best offer—\$100,000. It would have to be a cut-rate revolution, but the Panamanians accepted the terms.

Bunau-Varilla then went quickly back to the Seligman offices. At a desk in the partners' room he wrote a Panamanian Declaration of Independence and a constitution. He went to Macy's and bought silk for a Panama flag, which he had designed himself and, at James Seligman's summer house in Westchester, he spent a long evening stitching his new flag together. The following Monday he boarded a train for Washington and, as he said later, "I called on President Roosevelt and asked him point-blank if, when the revolt broke out, an American war ship would be sent to Panama to protect American lives and interests [including Seligman interests]. The President just looked at me; he said nothing. Of course, a President of the United States could not give such a commitment, especially to a foreigner and private citizen like me. But his look was enough for me."

And of course the warship *Nashville* did go to Panama to oversee the crisis. It stood offshore, and its presence was a considerable morale factor

for the seceding Panamanians—and helped persuade the Colombians to put down their weapons. The day was won for Philippe Buneau-Varilla, and for the Seligmans. The hand-stitched flag fluttered aloft, saluting one of the greatest public-relations triumphs of the age.

The Seligmans, understandably, were eager to show their gratitude to their new friend. They made a series of discreet suggestions to certain of *their* friends in Washington, and presently the most implausible event in an altogether unlikely career had come to pass: Philippe Buneau-Varilla, a citizen of France, was appointed the first Ambassador of the Republic of Panama to the United States.

Old Jesse Seligman had, in the meantime, withdrawn almost completely from the Panama Canal and its problems. After the failure of the first canal company, and the ordeal of the Congressional investigation, he too had begun to fail. Now Jesse's pride was assaulted again—from a place that wounded him even more.

The situation in New York's private clubs had become, in the 1890's, as it continues to be today, a complicated one. The Knickerbocker had a Jew among its founding members—Moses Lazarus, the father of Emma. The Union Club, older and far grander, had several Sephardic Lazaruses, Nathans, and Hendrickses. It had also had August Belmont, and it now had his sons—August, Jr., Oliver, and Perry—and it had at least one acknowledged German Jew, the banker Adolph Ladenburg. Though James Speyer campaigned vigorously against organizations which discriminated against Jews, he himself was considered “the only Jew in the Racquet Club.” For years, the most steadfastly anti-Jewish club in New York was the University, though the Yale seal, partly in Hebrew, on the club's McKim façade, often led people to suppose otherwise. The University Club had reciprocal privileges with the Bath Club in London, to which Isaac Seligman, and several of his sons, belonged. Yet when Isaac Seligman visited New York and attempted to stay at the University Club, he was advised against it. Other clubs operated on policies that were consistent only in their inconsistency.*

The Union League was Jesse Seligman's favorite club. He and his brothers Joseph and William had been virtually founding members. Joseph had been a vice president of the club at the time of his death, and now, in 1893, Jesse also was a vice president. Yet, though perhaps Jesse hadn't

noticed it, or refused to believe it, the Union League Club had already begun to adopt a certain “policy.” Jesse’s son Theodore was a young lawyer, recently out of Harvard, and had come to New York to practice. It seemed natural, to both Jesse and his son, that Theodore should join the Union League, which the Seligmans fondly thought of as part of the family. Theodore’s membership was sponsored by Mr. LeGrand Cannon, a founding member, and he was seconded by General Horace Porter. Many other distinguished members, including Joseph Choate and Elihu Root, were staunchly behind him. Yet, when action was taken on his membership application, Theodore Seligman was rejected. With exemplary lack of tact, the membership committee explained to Jesse that it was “not a personal matter in any way, either as to father or son. The objection is purely racial.”

Jesse immediately tendered his resignation. Equally quickly, and apparently at a loss as to why Jesse should be in the least bit upset about it, the club’s members voted unanimously not to accept it. Jesse stalked out the front door.

Being a Seligman and unable to take an insult lying down, Jesse released the story to the newspapers. There were the usual tongue-clicking and head-shaking and what-have-we-come-to editorials, but the fact was that it was a dreadfully familiar tale. The Mayor of New York, Thomas F. Gilroy, announced himself “shocked” over the club’s treatment of Jesse and, the very next week, revealed that a way had been devised by which the entire City of New York could “pay tribute” to Jesse Seligman, and demonstrate the “great honor” in which he was held by his fellow citizens.

It was a strange tribute that Mayor Gilroy devised. The Spanish Duke of Veragua was due to arrive in the city on a more or less state visit, and was to be driven down Broadway to City Hall, where he would be presented to the Mayor. The Mayor announced that his tribute would be to borrow Jesse’s coach—not Jesse himself, nor Henriette, nor young Theodore, whose reaction (unbridled embarrassment) to the hubbub the snub was causing was totally overlooked, but just the Seligman landau, horses, coachman, and footmen, to transport the Duke and Duchess. Whether this novel form of bestowing an honor comforted or merely amused Jesse is not known, but it thoroughly annoyed Henriette. The Mayor was commandeering her coach at an hour that coincided with her daily drive through the park.

The city flocked to cheer and ogle the royal couple, who, at the center of a long procession—including a full military regimental escort, marching bands, and mounted police—moved grandly downtown in the Seligmans' landau, with the Seligman footmen wearing rosettes of the Spanish colors.

Though he was still technically a member, Jesse never set foot inside the Union League Club again. His bitterness over the episode probably shortened his life, just as the affair with Judge Hilton shortened his brother's. Soon after Jesse's health began to fail. Tired and suffering from Bright's disease, he and his wife, their three sons and two of their daughters, boarded their private railroad car for California. (Travel, often elaborately undertaken, was considered good for the ailing in those days.) Ostensibly, the trip was for Jesse's health, but privately he had said that he never wanted to live in New York again. The family arrived at Coronado Beach in April, 1894. There, in the land he had come to as a gold-seeking pioneer half a century before, Jesse Seligman died.

Now New York undertook a prolonged display of guilt. Collis P. Huntington, a fellow railroad enthusiast and president of the Southern Pacific, ordered a special three-car funeral train to bear Jesse's body, and his widow and children, back to New York. Huntington commanded that the train be given precedence over all others, and as it made its long journey eastward its progress was followed in daily bulletins by all the New York papers.

A large delegation of mourners met the train at the station, and a throng of more than two thousand people appeared at Temple Emanu-El for the funeral, including a sixty-man delegation from the Union League Club who, led by the club's president, came on foot from the clubhouse to the temple. The mourners' names read like a Who's Who in banking, commerce and government of the era, and included Seth Low, Cornelius N. Bliss, Oscar S. Straus, Mayor Gilroy, Emanuel Lehman, John Wanamaker, Carl Schurz, Abraham Wolff, James McCreery, John Crosby Brown, and Bishop Henry C. Potter. A hundred and fifty children "whose rosy cheeks and cheerful looks betokened the care that is taken of them" entered the temple from Jesse's Hebrew Orphan Asylum. Outside, on Fifth Avenue, the police struggled with mourners who could not get in and, in the only unseemly moment of the day, arrested two of them, Moritz Rodeburg and James Back, who were identified as Nos. 23 and 2018, respectively, in the rogues'

gallery and who had been circulating among the wealthy throng as pickpockets. After the services, a slow procession carried the body to the Seligman mausoleum at Salem Fields, where Victor Herbert, “the violinist,” played at the grave.

Newspaper eulogies for Jesse continued for days. Several editors drew morals from his career. For example, the Bath, Maine, *Times* commented with Yankee common sense: “The late Jesse Seligman ... came to this country in 1840, and when he landed, inquired for a place where he could board for one dollar a week. He died worth \$30,000,000. Young man, if you follow his example, especially about the one dollar a week, you may be able to do the same thing.”

In New York the *Morning Advertiser* made Jesse the occasion of tart political comment:

The conditions under which he flourished would still exist but for some of the unreasonable exactions of Labor Organizations and but for the unwholesome doctrine that has been promulgated by political demagogues that labor has no fair chance and must look to legislation to do for the workingman what Mr. Seligman and thousands of others have done for themselves. These successful men, working with their hands and spending less than their small earnings, did not look for any easy road to success. Industry, thrift, and caution, turning a deaf ear to the allurements of fleeting pleasures and to the harangues of the demagogue, comprise all the secret of their success.

One point was missed. This was that Jesse’s funeral bore overtones of a deeper, more poignant tragedy. A whole era was over. Joseph, Jesse, and Abraham Seligman were all dead, and so were two of their sisters, Babette and Sarah. The other five brothers were old men now, and losing their effectiveness. (James Seligman, seventy, whose peddling innovation, the horse and wagon, had done so much to improve the Seligmans’ fortunes, now distrusted “that new gadget,” the telephone, and required an underling to place and accept all his calls.) Fanny Seligman’s dream for “the boys, the boys” was being intercepted by the logic of mortality.

The great era of J. & W. Seligman & Company, as a firm, was also over. It had really ended fourteen years before when Joseph died and was no longer there to tell his brothers what to do. Joseph and his brothers had

many children, but who would carry on? The company was beginning its long decline, from a great international banking house with offices in New York, San Francisco, New Orleans, Paris, and London to what it is today—a small, prestigious investment house with but a single office in New York.

* It was the dawn of national advertising, and the value of having a “big name” endorse a product had been early discovered. An ad of the period depicts none other than President and Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes touting the virtues of an appliance called a “Cold Handle Sad Iron.” Lucy Hayes is saying to the President, “We cannot leave until we visit the Enterprise Mfg. Co. and order some of Mrs. Potts’ Cold Handle Sad Irons like this.” The President replies, “But my dear they are for sale by all Hardware Stores in this country.”

* Which modern engineering studies have determined would actually have been a better route.

* He had been a classmate of Colonel Dreyfus at l’Ecole Polytechnique, and, at the time of Dreyfus’ conviction, Buneau-Varilla and his brother had been publishers of *Le Matin* in Paris. It was the Buneau-Varilla brothers who, in 1896, had startled the world by publishing photographs of two letters—one the incriminating letter Dreyfus had allegedly written to the German attaché, and the other, in a totally different handwriting, a letter Dreyfus had actually written a few years earlier to Philippe Buneau-Varilla. This bit of journalism reopened the case, and led to the whole affair that followed.

* At Yale the leading senior society, Skull and Bones, for years never took in a Jew, though it did take in the Negro football player, Levi Jackson. *That* led to the observation, “If his name had been the other way around ...”

THE LADIES

In the glorious, innocent 1880's and 1890's Wall Street, when it wasn't undergoing panics, had been a jolly, happy-go-lucky place. As *Harper's Magazine* pointed out, "The nervous force necessarily expended in rapid reasoning and quick decision is often directed into other channels to relieve the overtasked brain."

The younger members of "the broker tribe," as they were called, relieved their overtasked brains with such affairs as an annual regatta in the harbor for their rowing association. Beer flowed plentifully, and the men showed up in jaunty straw boaters. (A star oarsman in these events was Isaac Newton Seligman, Joseph's son; Ike had rowed on the Columbia crew, and had helped his college defeat both Harvard and Yale on Saratoga Lake.) There were also baseball games against college teams, and "friendly struggles among themselves, in which the 'Good Boys' pitted against the 'Bad Boys.'" Lunchtime wrestling matches on Bowling Green were also popular.

The biggest party of all took place at Christmas, and all merry hell broke loose on the Street when members of the financial community "luxuriate in the blowing of tin horns and bugles, smashing of broker hats, pelting with blown bladders, wet towels, and surreptitious snowballs, and in the sly insertion of cooling crystals between the collars of unsuspecting brethren. Hot pennies are sometimes used."

But for the German Jewish bankers, the horseplay and the fraternity-lodge equality tended to halt at the close of the business day, and the men returned to their houses and womenfolk uptown, and to a social life that was increasingly family-centered and self-contained.

Each woman had her group of women friends whose husbands were also her husband's friends, and often these friendships led to tighter business connections, and, in the younger generation, when sons and daughters of friends married each other, friendships were cemented into kinships. The mothers of the crowd studied the marriage market for suitable partners, while fathers studied the upcoming crop of young men as possible business partners. Marcus and Bertha Goldman were particularly good friends of Joseph and Sophia Sachs, the poor tutor and the rich goldsmith's daughter who had run away to America in 1848. In the United States Joseph had worked as a schoolteacher—and, for a period, as a rabbi—in Baltimore and Boston before settling in New York. It was Joseph's oldest son, Julius, a scholar like his father, who had established the Sachs Collegiate Institute, and who taught most of the children of the crowd, and Julius married the Goldmans' daughter, Rosa—a match both Bertha Goldman and Sophia Sachs had promoted. Now, in the 1880's, another Goldman daughter, Louise, was marriageable, and Bertha and Sophia decided that she would be perfect for Sophia's second son, Sam. The young people agreed, and Marcus Goldman invited Sam to be his first partner in the commercial-paper business which, up to this point, he still carried on singlehandedly, with the help of his hat.*

To join his new father-in-law, Sam Sachs was required to liquidate a small dry-goods business which he had been operating, and, to facilitate this, Marcus loaned Sam \$15,000. The loan was to be repaid in three promissory notes of \$5,000 each, over a three-year period. By the time Sam's and Louise's third son was born, Sam had repaid Marcus two of the three notes, and Grandfather Marcus, in his old-fashioned German script, wrote formally to his son-in-law to say that, in recognition of Sam's "energy and ability" as a partner, and in honor of little Walter's arrival, he was forgiving Sam the final payment. Louise Goldman Sachs, a sentimental sort, always kept her father's letter, along with the canceled note, in the little strongbox where she kept, tied in faded bows, her little boys' silky blond ringlets and, dated and labeled, all their baby teeth.

"And thus," Walter Sachs was able to say years later, "it appeared that on the very first day of my entrance into this world, I concluded my first business deal for Goldman, Sachs."

The Goldmans and the Sachses, however, were still relatively minor figures, socially, in the crowd. Two ladies had for years contended for social leadership—Mrs. Solomon Loeb and Mrs. Jesse Seligman. Betty Loeb was famous chiefly for her dinners, whereas Henriette Seligman was renowned for the large scale on which she lived and for her grand manner.

Henriette was a creature of habit. Her carriage always arrived at her door at precisely the same moment each day for her drive through Central Park, and neither the length nor the route of the excursion ever varied. She and Jesse entertained frequently, and, since Henriette believed that punctuality was not only a duty of royalty but a courtesy that royalty deserved, whenever her butler announced dinner, she arose and proceeded into the dining room, regardless of whether or not all her guests had arrived. When she traveled to Europe, as she did at intervals of clocklike regularity, she always engaged the same stateroom on the same steamship and, since her itinerary never varied, the same suites in the same hotels.

In Paris her hotel was, naturally, the Ritz, and once the old Kaiser Wilhelm was planning a state visit to Paris coincidental with Mrs. Seligman's. The Ritz, who knew Mrs. Seligman's preferences only too well, deemed it wise to go through the German ambassador to see if, just possibly, Mrs. Seligman would be willing to relinquish her suite for the Kaiser and accept another. Henriette replied that she was "not ready for a change of suite," and that, though she was very sorry, nothing could be done. The Kaiser slept elsewhere.

She had, on the other hand, a true sense of *noblesse oblige* when it came to the sleeping habits of the working classes. Early one morning in her New York house, Henriette was awakened by a noise belowstairs. Convinced of the presence of a burglar, she rose and, in wrapper and slippers, descended to the parlor floor to find the culprit. She found no one there, and so, though she was extremely nearsighted and had left her glasses upstairs and had only a candle to light her way, she continued to the basement. There, in the darkness ahead of her, she heard the sound of running footsteps as the frightened prowler hurried to an open window and made his way out. Henriette proceeded to the window and cried out imperiously, "Do not return!" to the retreating figure in the street. Then she closed and bolted the window and went upstairs to bed.

The next day she told her friends and family of this episode at her customary hour for telling things, teatime. Someone asked her why she hadn't waked her husband. "Mr. Seligman was recovering from an illness," she replied. "I couldn't think of disturbing him."

"But, Auntie," said a nephew, "why didn't you ring for one of the menservants?"

She gave the young man a disapproving look. "My servants," she said, "had done their day's work. It was my duty to put my home in order."

The Seligman house stood in Forty-sixth Street near Fifth Avenue, and the Jay Gould mansion was a block to the north. Between these two residences stood a hotel called the Windsor, which burned down with a great loss of life. During the fire Henriette, with her customary considerateness, opened the lower floors of her house for use as a temporary hospital for the wounded and dying, and her daughters and maids served sandwiches and coffee to the firemen. Mrs. Seligman herself could not come down; the fire occurred at that hour of the day which she customarily devoted to her embroidery. It was here, over her needlework in her upstairs sitting room, that she agreed to receive the Fire Commissioner of the City of New York, who said he had come to deliver a message of some urgency, even though it was not the proper hour for callers. The Commissioner was ushered in, and explained that the shell of the Windsor seemed about to collapse, and that very likely a large portion of it would fall on Mrs. Seligman's house.

"Then, Commissioner, I do feel that the lady of the house should be present when that happens," said Henriette, completing a stitch.

"Your roof has already caught fire three times," said the Commissioner and, clearly aware that he was in the presence of a Personage, added, "I have come here to have the honor of escorting you out."

"Thank you very much," said Henriette, "but my menservants—" there were four—"are taking care of the roof."

"Exactly. And I want them to continue doing just what they're doing—putting out the flames on the roof."

Henriette gave him another of her stern looks. "Mr. Commissioner," she said, "are you suggesting that I leave and my servants *stay*?"

"Of course."

“If a house is safe enough for the servants, it is safe enough for the mistress,” said Mrs. Seligman, and went on with her embroidery.

At ten o’clock, her usual hour, she prepared to retire. As she rose to go to her bedroom, she said to one of her nephews, “If things become *too* dangerous, I count upon your waking me.” In her bedroom she undressed and turned down her bed. This was her only concession to the situation, that she did not ring for one of her maids to turn down the coverlet for her.

A few feet away from her bedroom wall, a tower of flames rose into the night. Above her, through the night, her roof caught fire repeatedly. Just before midnight, the blazing husk of the Windsor tipped, swayed, and came thundering down, missing the Seligman house by inches and scattering fiery bricks on the roofs of the Seligmans’ and the Goulds’. Mrs. Seligman slept on. The Goulds had evacuated their house hours before.

Babet Seligman, Joseph’s widow, was a much more modest lady, who was always rather awed by the ways of her aristocratic sister-in-law. After her husband’s death Babet went into heavy mourning, and, though she survived Joseph by nearly a quarter of a century, she never emerged from her widow’s weeds and never again appeared at any large social gathering or public function. Her entertaining was limited to little family dinners. Edward, her coachman, also went into perpetual mourning for his master, in a black uniform with the monogram “J.S.” stitched in black on the sleeve. Edward, in fact, became Babet Seligman’s one male friend. On their rides through the park they chatted through the speaking tube.

Quite another story was James Seligman’s wife, Rosa. Rosa was a Content, and James married her when she was just seventeen, a beauty with a highly bred, olive-skinned Modigliani face and huge dark flashing eyes. But she had a violent and unpredictable temper, and the Contents had made it quite clear that they thought Rosa was marrying beneath her station, and that they had consented to the union simply because James Seligman was rich.

By the 1880’s James’s and Rosa’s had become a notably unhappy marriage. Rosa was an excellent dancer, but James was not. “Germans,” she used to say contemptuously, “are always heavy on their feet.” She took her Content heritage seriously, and enjoyed referring to the Seligmans as “the peddlers.” It soon developed that she was an almost compulsive spender. James was miserly in his personal spending, but the family said that this

was because it cost him so much to pay Rosa's bills. She demanded furs, dresses, jewels, and beautiful houses, and James got them for her. She insisted on numerous servants, and he hired them for her, even though she often pointed out that the servants had more distinguished pedigrees than the Seligmans. She had an English butler whose first name was the same as her husband's, and it amused her to say, in front of dinner guests, "James, will you please tell Jim that dinner is ready?"

She raised eight children, but would let none of them bring friends into the house, claiming that other people's children were inferior and probably germy. In her youth Rosa's behavior had been attributed to "temperament," and she was considered "high-strung." As she grew older, her conduct grew increasingly erratic, her outbursts and tantrums more frequent and alarming. Soon Seligman family letters began to refer darkly to "our family skeleton"—not a reference to Rosa, but to the fact that James had sought solace in a young mistress. Rosa began to spend most of her days in department stores, where she would astonish salesgirls by leaning across counter tops and whispering confidentially, "When do you think my husband last slept with me?"

Rosa Content Seligman may have been odd, but her children were even odder. One daughter, Florette, married Meyer Guggenheim's son, Benjamin (the "smelter" of the Seligmans' cablegram), and that union produced the art-collecting Peggy Guggenheim, who, in her autobiography, wrote that most of her Seligman aunts and uncles were "peculiar, if not mad." She also insists that James and Rosa had eleven children, though *The Seligman Family Register*, privately published in 1913, lists only eight. What became of the other three, if they ever existed, is a family mystery. The eight remaining were certainly colorful.

One aunt, wrote Peggy Guggenheim,

was an incurable soprano. If you happened to meet her on the corner of Fifth Avenue while waiting for a bus, she would open her mouth wide and sing scales trying to make you do as much. She wore her hat hanging off the back of her head or tilted over one ear. A rose was always stuck in her hair. Long hatpins emerged dangerously, not from her hat, but from her hair. Her trailing dresses swept up the dust of the streets. She invariably wore a feather boa. She was an excellent cook

and made beautiful tomato jelly. Whenever she wasn't at the piano, she could be found in the kitchen or reading the ticker-tape. She had a strange complex about germs and was forever wiping her furniture with Lysol. But she had such extraordinary charm that I really loved her. I cannot say her husband felt as much. After he had fought with her for over thirty years, he tried to kill her and one of her sons by hitting them with a golf club. Not succeeding, he rushed to the reservoir where he drowned himself with heavy weights tied to his feet.

Another of Rosa's daughters grew to be enormously fat. Despite this handicap she convinced herself that she had had a long and passionate love affair with a druggist. She even knew his name—Balch. The family tried to persuade her that the druggist Balch was imaginary, but to no avail. She was so overridden with guilt and remorse that she became “melancholic” and had to be placed in a home.

James's son Washington had curious dietary theories, and lived on charcoal and cracked ice and almost no food. His teeth were black from chewing charcoal, and the ice he sucked between the bites of charcoal made him a somewhat noisy dinner companion. Whiskey was also a part of his diet, and he always had a glassful before breakfast. He had his suits constructed with a special zinc-lined pocket to hold his ice cubes, and once, when his tailor mistook Washington's instructions, Washington cried out, “No! No! The *right* pocket is to hold the ice! the *left* pocket is for the charcoal”—to the bewilderment of other customers in the shop. At a very early age he had adopted the practice of threatening to commit suicide unless his father gave him what he wanted and, as a result, he was permitted to keep his very own mistress in his room—a room none of the rest of the family was permitted to visit. He was certainly a trial. Finally, however, he carried out one of his threats and shot himself in the temple.

Another brother had a neurosis the opposite of his mother's. He refused to spend any money at all. In order to eat, he showed up at his relatives' houses at mealtimes, usually saying he wasn't hungry and then devouring everything in sight. He repaid his hosts with after-dinner entertainment; it was always the same. He placed chairs in a long row, and then slid and wiggled along the seats on his stomach. His act was called “the snake.”

Brother Eugene had been an infant prodigy, and was ready for college at the age of eleven. So as not, to be conspicuous, he waited three years and graduated from Columbia at eighteen with the highest honors in his class. He became a practicing lawyer, and a bachelor, whose only pronounced peculiarity was his obsession about cleanliness. He bathed six or seven times each weekday, and much oftener on Sundays. De Witt Seligman also had a law degree, but he never practiced. His favorite pastime was writing plays, none of which was ever produced. Playwriting experts used to say that De Witt had talent—at least for getting his characters into suspenseful situations and predicaments. The only trouble was, he could never quite figure out solutions for the troubles his characters had got themselves into. Invariably his plays ended in a way that reflected their author's dilemma: a gigantic explosion took place, eliminating everybody.

Jefferson Seligman had ways more beguiling than any of his brothers and sisters. Jeff married a girl named Julia Wormser for whom he cared little. The couple soon separated, and Jeff took two small hotel rooms in the East Sixties where he began a life devoted to keeping young ladies clothed and warm. Peggy Guggenheim has said that her uncle's rooms were stocked with fur coats, and "Almost any girl could have one for the asking." Geoffrey T. Hellman, on the other hand, has written that Jeff kept closets full of dresses from Klein's which were equally available to all his friends. Probably he went through a fur-coat period, and then, for reasons of economy, followed this with a dresses-from-Klein's period. It is known that his sister Florette once visited him and seized a supply of dresses in her size, saying, "I don't see why I shouldn't have some, too!"

Jeff had some charming social theories. Once, in a newspaper interview, he came out strongly against the practice of shaking hands, saying that this custom sped the transmission of germs. Instead of handshaking, he recommended kissing. He also suggested that the New York Street Cleaning Department should not sprinkle streets their entire length, but leave little dry gaps every block or so, so that old ladies could cross without getting their feet wet.

Jeff Seligman had the health and welfare of the whole human race at heart. He had been made a partner in J. & W. Seligman & Company, but he was never really interested in banking, and there is no evidence that he did any work, executed a single order, or participated in a single decision. But

instead, as Geoffrey Hellman has written, “Somewhere along the line he got off on a novel tack. He began to establish himself as the fruit-and-ginger Seligman.” He had a theory that plenty of fruit and ginger was good for the body and good for the brains, and he arrived at the office each morning with his basket of fruit and his box of ginger. Starting in the partners’ room, where the brains of the company were supposedly concentrated, he distributed his goods to his cousins and uncles. “On even the busiest days, the partners would accept the fruit and ginger Jeff offered,” a former Seligman employee told Hellman. “He would then distribute the remainder to the lower echelons. One day, when I was talking to one of the partners in the partners’ room, Jeff gave me a banana. I went back to my desk in another room, and a little while later Jeff showed up and started to hand me an orange. He peered at me, and withdrew the orange. ‘You’ve already had your fruit,’ he said.”

J. & W. Seligman eventually established a dining room on the top floor of their Wall Street building, and, having checked to make sure that the kitchen contained plenty of fresh fruit, Jeff was able to discontinue his fruit line, but he continued to serve ginger. Jeff Seligman was Peggy Guggenheim’s favorite uncle. She called him “a gentleman of the old school.”

Peggy’s mother, Florette, was not without her little quirks. She had a strange nervous habit of repeating phrases three times. Once, when stopped by a policeman for driving the wrong way down a one-way street, Florette replied, with some logic, “But I was only going one way, one way, one way.” Another family story insists that Florette once told a clerk in a department store, “I want a hat with a feather, a feather, a feather,” and was sold a hat with three feathers.

Peggy Guggenheim has referred to her mother’s and grandmother’s circle of friends as “the most boring ladies of the haute Jewish bourgeoisie.” But Peggy was a rebel, and the bore is in the eye of the beholder. Certainly these ladies did not bore each other. They gathered in their uptown drawing rooms over their silver tea services, on their regular afternoons, and discussed the topics of the day, one of which, by 1888, was “What shall we do about the Guggenheims?” The others were children, clothes, health. Mrs. Semon Bache advised that children under three years old should be fed fruit sparingly. Bananas were especially dangerous. “After a baby is one year

old, he may be fed a teaspoonful of orange juice occasionally,” she commented. “But only if he’s in perfect health.” Mrs. Lazarus Hallgarten was concerned about “promiscuous bathing,” for not only were women appearing on the beaches in snug-fitting bathing skirts and blouses but, of all things, stockings that exposed the *toes*. Mrs. Mayer Lehman commented that “The laced shoe is rapidly gaining followers,” and wondered how the others in the group felt about this development. Mrs. Solomon Loeb had heard of a new cure for whooping cough: “A handful of dried chestnut leaves boiled in a pint of water—a wineglassful once an hour.” And so it went.

In the evenings the families entertained each other at dinners large and small. The women were particularly concerned about what was “fashionable,” and why shouldn’t they have been? Many of them had been born poor and in another country, and now they found themselves stepping out of a cocoon and into a new and lovely light. They felt like prima donnas, and, now that their husbands were becoming men of such influence and substance, they wanted to be guilty of no false steps in their new land. They wanted desperately to be a part of their period, and as much as said so. Beadwork was fashionable. One had to do it. It was the era of the “Turkish corner,” and the ladies sewed scratchy little beaded covers for toss pillows. At one dinner party, while the ladies were discussing what was fashionable and what was not, Marcus Goldman rose a little stiffly from the table, folded his heavy damask napkin beside his plate, and said, “Money is *always* fashionable,” and stalked out of the room.

* By 1880 the Goldman topper transported as much as \$30 million worth of paper a year.

SONS, DAUGHTERS, REBELS

The eight original Seligman brothers had sired, between them, thirty-six sons, and their sisters and brothers-in-law had been responsible for eight more. It was an impressive total. But out of it, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, it began to seem that there were painfully few boys who had any interest in, much less talent for, banking. Joseph's oldest son, David, accepted a partnership at J. & W. Seligman, but he showed up at the office only once every week or so, usually to check on the state of his own portfolio. Another son, Edwin R. A., taught political economy at Columbia, and another, Alfred Lincoln, was artistic. He and his wife Florine, who were childless, conducted salons.

Still others of the second generation had become gentlemen of leisure, or had succumbed to what the *Morning Advertiser* called "the allurements of fleeting pleasures." In fact, the only Seligman boy out of the forty-four who appeared to have marked financial ability was Joseph's second son, Isaac Newton, who, upon his Uncle Jesse's death, became head of the firm at the age of thirty-nine.

With the easygoing *nil admirari* attitude they often seemed to affect, the Seligmans never appeared to be unduly concerned about their lack of able and dutiful sons to carry on. Boys were permitted to drift along whatever paths they chose (Jeff, for example, with his nutritionist theories, had once wanted to be a doctor, and had studied medicine in Germany before settling on a Seligman partnership). Other fathers of Joseph's and Jesse's generation, however, cared desperately about turning their sons into bankers like themselves, and when twigs did not bend naturally in that direction, force was sometimes used.

The Lehmans were lucky. All three of the original brothers had competent sons, and by the 1890's there were five Lehmans in the firm: in addition to Mayer and Emanuel, there were Mayer's son Sigmund, Emanuel's son Philip, and a nephew, Meyer H. Lehman, the son of Henry Lehman who had died in the South. The Lehman firm had been cautiously expanding—investing money in an early automobile company, a rubber manufacturer—but it was still a commodity house, trading in cotton, coffee, and petroleum, and was therefore ranked far below other New York banking houses in prestige and importance.

Solomon Loeb, on the other hand, had founded a banking house that now rivaled the Seligmans'. Forced into the background by his brash son-in-law, Jacob Schiff, Solomon's one hope had been that the Loeb name could be perpetuated in the firm through his two sons, Morris and James, who, by the time they reached their twenties, began to collapse under the weight of their parents' towering ambitions and to wilt from the intensity with which they had been trained as children.

Morris Loeb ran away from home, was found in Philadelphia and returned, and after that point he was carefully watched. He became a shy and nervous young man with quick, frightened gestures and a hunted look in his eyes. He had a terror of mirrors (it was he who had papered the mirror in the Schiffs' sitting room), and an even greater dread of becoming a banker. He began to have a fetish about money, and a fear of spending it. He quarreled frequently with his mother about the lavishness with which she set her dinner table, and he once offered her a prize if she could produce a Sunday dinner so simple that there would be no leftovers. (Needless to say, she never won the prize.) Morris scrimped and saved pennies and squirreled them away. (When the Loeb house was demolished many years later, some of Morris' deposits were discovered behind moldings and beneath floor boards; the wallpaper of one room was interlined with thousand-dollar bills.)

For all the quirks of his personality, Morris was a splendid student at Dr. Sachs's school, and though his father explained to Julius Sachs that "He is to be trained, of course, as a banker," Morris' best subject was science. He graduated at sixteen, went on to Harvard into the class of 1883, and, since he was the first of his father's children to go to college, Solomon Loeb said to him, "I have no idea how much an American education costs," and gave

him a blank checkbook. Morris never wrote out a single check, though he got through Harvard with honors.

By the time Morris was graduated, his father had despaired of making him into a banker. Seeing that their son was, whether they liked it or not, a chemist, Solomon and Betty bent all their efforts toward making him the greatest chemist in the world. His parents proceeded to build him his own, fully equipped laboratory, right on the grounds and next door to their summer house at Elberon. Here Morris seemed happy with his burners and test tubes and lixivias, and his young cousins remember a gentle, absent-minded man who, when they tapped on the door of his lab, would sometimes let them in and entertain them by blowing glass in bright, strange shapes for them. Eventually, Morris got a job as Professor of Chemistry at N.Y.U.

Morris was married rather late, in 1895 at the age of thirty-two (but it was a Kuhn, Loeb marriage, which pleased his father), to the handsome and statuesque Eda Kuhn, a sort of cousin (Eda's aunt was Solomon Loeb's sister, and another aunt had been Solomon's first wife). If Morris and Eda had had children, the cousinships among the Loebes and Kuhns would have become even more tangled, but theirs was a barren, lonely, and difficult marriage. Sometimes Morris would approach his father and say that he had to get out, away from the world of silk-covered walls and gilt and mirrors; he wanted to run away again—somewhere, anywhere. “But your laboratory is here, Morris,” his father gently reminded him. “Right here on the place. What else could you want?”

Morris began to have an obsession about the cleanliness of his food, and a fear of being poisoned. Driven, haunted, he subjected every morsel he was served to elaborate chemical tests. Ironically, at a chemical convention in Washington, far from his lab, he ate a bad oyster, developed typhoid fever, and died.

Having given up on Morris, Solomon had concentrated on James. Jim Loeb was, at first glance, totally different from Morris—handsome, strong, with a vivid personality full of life and humor. He was a scholar and an esthete and a talented musician, playing the cello as well as the piano and organ. After Dr. Sachs's and Harvard—again near the top of the class—he was offered a chance to study Egyptology in Paris and London, with a curatorship of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and a teaching post at

Harvard to follow. For months Jim Loeb begged his father to let him take this study offer, but Solomon was adamant. One of his seed line had to join the bank, and there was no alternative. Finally, Jim acquiesced and joined Kuhn, Loeb & Company. Jim's brother-in-law, Jacob Schiff, liked assistants and advisers, but not peers. It was not easy for Jim in a line of work he hated and yet from which so much was expected of him. He also soon realized that his young nephew, Morti Schiff, was the more dutiful son, and that Kuhn, Loeb, if Jacob Schiff had anything to say about it, would one day be turned over to Morti. But Jim tried to do as he was told and, in his after-work hours, played the cello, began a collection of early Greek figures, and fell in love.

The name of the girl whom Jim Loeb loved and wanted to marry is one of those which has been written out of family records, but it is known that she was beautiful, loved him very much, and was a gentile. She is said by some to have been the daughter of a prominent New York family who, in fact, were friends of the senior Loeb's. But the religious barrier—to Solomon, even though he was a professed agnostic—was insurmountable, and the union was considered out of the question. There was pressure put on Jim Loeb to give up the girl, and it came from Solomon, Betty, from all the Kuhns and Wolffs, from the giant Kuhn, Loeb Company itself, and, most powerfully, from Jacob Schiff. Jim Loeb resisted for a while, and then, as the family has put it, "extreme pressures" were applied.

"Life in New York," wrote his niece Frieda Schiff tenderly, for she admired her handsome Uncle Jim very much, and they were close in age, "began to press on him, and he went abroad to consult a neurologist." The neurologist was Dr. Sigmund Freud, and for a while Jim Loeb lived in Freud's house. Then he settled in Germany. A generous sum of money was given him, and he built a large house on a deeply wooded estate at Murnau, near Munich, where he lived as a recluse, filling his hours by building his art collection, a vast collection of rare books, and by sponsoring the now famous Loeb Classical Library. Over the fireplace in his sitting room, Jim Loeb hung a portrait of his father to remind him of what he had left behind. Back home in New York, Jacob Schiff summoned his lawyers and had his will rewritten to stipulate that either of his unmarried children would be disinherited if he or she married a non-Jew.

To add to the sad story of the Loeb children, there was also Solomon Loeb's "beautiful, temperamental, musical" daughter, Guta, who, in 1883, had married Isaac Newton Seligman—"the first real American," as the Loeb's proudly pointed out, in the conventional, German-speaking Loeb-Schiff household. Ike and Guta had one son, Joseph, but Guta's life was blighted by a series of nervous breakdowns. "Her mother overtrained her," one of the family said. "She had been so regimented and disciplined that she had no resources of her own." Most of poor Guta's married years were spent in sanitariums.

Emanie Sachs wrote a novel of German Jewish society in New York as it existed around the turn of the century. It was called "Red Damask," and depicted a closed and cloistered social order, strikingly consistent in its attitudes, a world governed by obedience and traditions where, if one had diligence and character, one "didn't need religion"; where behavior was a matter of "having high standards and living up to them"; where "Right was right, and wrong was wrong; in doubt, your conscience would tell you what to do." It was a world whose figures moved with the mechanical precision of Venetian clock figures, where life was scheduled for the proper thing at the proper moment, and where a woman "did not do bead-work when embroidery was fashionable."

In a world the novel's heroine sees as rigid and prisonlike, she longs for escape, to break out of the pattern, to "pioneer" in some new city where she is unknown and where her family name stands for nothing. At a crucial point in the story, the heroine cries:

"Good heavens! What's life for? ... Our crowd here. They cover their walls with the same silks. Why, there isn't a house we go to, including Sherry's, that hasn't a damask wall! They go to the same dentist and the same grocer and the same concerts. They think alike and act alike and they're scared to death not to talk alike. The men go to jobs their fathers or grandfathers created, and all they do is sit at desks and let the organizations work ... they go in for art collections with an expert to help. They wouldn't risk a penny on their own tastes. They wouldn't risk anything."

The place this rebellious spirit wants to go is El Paso. But, in the end, she goes nowhere. The silken web is too strong. She is trapped like a figure in a crystal paperweight, “where even the snowstorms seem private,” and where “engagements, scheduled weeks ahead, were changed only for serious illness, or death, or steamer sailings.”

Though men like Solomon Loeb and Jacob Schiff had been rebels and runaways and gamblers (immigration itself had been a gamble), they found it difficult to understand such impulses in their children. They expected, instead, an attitude of *Pflicht und Arbeit*.

A child in this gilded ghetto was not supposed to have a life of his own.

ELBERON, AND POINTS NORTH AND SOUTH

The incredible “Gilded Age” of the 1880’s and 1890’s was also an age of list-making, and, as each new list appeared, a new delineation between first- and second-rate Americans was established. In 1887 the *Social Register* was copyrighted, and its first volume appeared for New York City the following spring. There were less than two thousand families in this “record of society, comprising an accurate and careful list of its members, with their addresses, many of the maiden names of the married women, the club addresses of the men, officers of the leading clubs and social organizations, opera box holders, and other useful social information.” With the birth of the *Social Register*, New York society felt that it had at last organized itself into an aristocracy. In his *Saga of American Society*, Dixon Wecter wrote: “Here at last, unencumbered with advertisements of dressmakers and wine merchants, enhanced by large, clear type and a pleasant binding of orange and black—which if anything suggested the colors of America’s most elegant university—was a convenient listing of one’s friends and potential friends. It was an immediate triumph.” The *Social Register*, of course, rather conspicuously included no Jewish names, but it was such a success that Ward McAllister suggested that “our good Jews might wish to put out a little book of their own, called something else, of course.”

McAllister himself—who was called “Mr. Make-a-Lister”—was the author of an even more abbreviated list of names of New York’s “best”—his Four Hundred for Mrs. William Waldorf Astor. Since Mrs. Astor’s ballroom only held four hundred, McAllister started saying in 1888, soon after the *Social Register* appeared, that there were really only about that

number in society, the *Register*'s two thousand families notwithstanding. "If you go outside four hundred," McAllister said, "you strike people who are either not at ease in a ballroom or else make other people not at ease." Whether McAllister intended to include August Belmont, owner of one of New York's first ballrooms, among those comfortable in ballrooms has never been clear. Mrs. Belmont and Mrs. Astor had become social rivals, and McAllister was on Mrs. Astor's side. Though McAllister began talking "four hundred" in 1888, he did not publish his official list (which ran to slightly more than three hundred people) until 1892, two years after August Belmont had died and been buried with full Christian ceremony. McAllister's published list (printed in the *New York Times*, which is an indication of the attention paid to such matters in those days) included several widows, but it did not include Caroline Belmont. Both Belmonts, however, made the earliest editions of the *Social Register*.

"Our good Jews" did not put together a *Social Register* of their own, perhaps because those who composed Jewish society knew too well who belonged and who did not, and did not need to refer to a list. "In the years following the Seligman-Hilton affair," one member of the crowd said, "the German Jewish elite became ... well, not *nonassimilationist*, exactly, but less *actively* assimilationist." Referring to the Mrs. Astor group as "the butterflies," Jews watched the activities of the Four Hundred from a distance and with a certain cool disdain.

Though Jacob Schiff remained on Fifth Avenue, there began to be a general German Jewish migration to the West Side of Manhattan, and the blocks between Seventieth and Eightieth streets, Central Park West and Columbus Avenue, became the first recognizably German Jewish upper-class neighborhood. In this period there was talk of Central Park West becoming "the Jewish Fifth Avenue." The area south of Seventieth Street was still a shantytown, with herds of goats grazing among the rocks at the edge of the park, but north of Seventieth, in handsome four- and five-story brownstones, many of which stand today as rooming houses, several families of the crowd arranged themselves. Marcus Goldman and his son-in-law, Sam Sachs, purchased adjoining houses in West Seventieth Street. On West Seventy-first lived the Cullmans; on Seventy-second the Meyers. Harry Sachs, Sam's brother, bought a large house on West Seventy-fourth

Street, and Marcus Goldman's son Henry bought an even larger one on West Seventy-sixth.

The second generation was continuing to be just as intramural when it came to marriage as the first. The last decades of the nineteenth century were a period of consolidation, of gathering in. Mayer Lehman's son Sigmund married his first cousin, Emanuel's daughter Harriet. Just as Joseph Seligman and his wife had been first cousins, now Joseph's sister's son, Eugene Stettheimer, married Joseph's brother Henry's daughter, Grace. William Seligman's daughter Leonore married Max Wassermann, and William's son David married Max's sister, Sophie, while Jesse Seligman's daughter, Emma, married another Wassermann brother, Edward. In 1878 young Adolph Lewisohn married into the crowd. His bride was Emma Cahn, who was related to the Cahns of J. S. Bache & Company, who were related by marriage to the Baches.

Along a wide stretch of New Jersey shore—in Elberon and such adjacent resort towns to the north and south as Long Branch, Deal Beach, Sea Bright, Allenhurst, and West End—a German Jewish summer colony was developing: “The Jewish Newport.” Peggy Guggenheim described Elberon as “a sort of ghetto,” and so it was—but then so was Newport. The space of Atlantic Ocean that separated the two places became, like the width of Central Park between Central Park West and Fifth Avenue, symbolic of the social separation of the two communities, each of which had begun to look inward, upon its own problems and satisfactions, rather than outward upon the world.

Life at Elberon was remarkable for its sense of isolation and tranquility, as well as for the amenities it contained, the feelings of conviction and complacency that seemed to surround each day's scheduled activity. Of course there were some who found Elberon stifling in its addiction to Victorian conformity. Emania Sachs described the residents of the colony as “padded with red damask, built of a pattern in a piece, dancing round and round in a golden trap, getting nowhere.” But much the same could have been said of Elberon's gentile counterpart on the Rhode Island shore.

Peggy Guggenheim called Elberon “the ugliest place in the world. Not one tree or bush grew on this barren coast. The only flowers I remember were rambler roses, nasturtiums and hydrangeas, and since then I have not been able to endure them. My grandfather had a family mansion in West

End ... a hideous Victorian house.” Nearby lived several of her Guggenheim uncles, one in “an exact copy of the Petit Trianon at Versailles,” and another in an “Italian villa with marble Pompeian inner courts and beautiful grottoes and sunken gardens. Compared to these, my grandfather Seligman’s house was a modest affair.” The Guggenheims were still considered *nouveau riche*.

Sam Sachs also chose a European theme for his Elberon house—“a kind of an adaptation of an Italian palazzo” of white stucco, with a red-tiled roof and fountains and formal gardens “adapted from Versailles.” Both Solomon Loeb and Jacob Schiff had houses on this shore, the latter’s predictably grander than the former’s. Jacob Schiff was the first man of the crowd to rent his own private stateroom for the season on the ferryboat, *Asbury Park*, on which he commuted from Manhattan. He used the stateroom as an office, and he spent the trip (it took just over an hour) sitting in a wicker chair writing tense little memoranda on scraps of paper.

Many Seligmans—Jesse and his son Henry, Joseph’s sons Isaac and David, Joseph’s daughter Frances Hellman, and James’s son Jefferson (of the fruit and ginger)—had summer homes on the bluffs around Elberon, and theirs were more typical of the style and mood of the place: large Victorian houses, hectic with gingerbread, millwork, and decorative cupolas, surrounded on all sides by wide porches that were covered with high-backed rocking chairs that rocked all day long by themselves in the offshore breezes, where Seligmans and their friends gathered to sit in long rows, and rock, and look at the sea, and smoke their cigars, and talk business. The women, under parasols, took little walks between the nodding blue heads of hydrangeas, and some of them must have asked themselves why, when they had all this ease, anyone would have preferred the Grand Union Hotel at Saratoga?

The salt air made for hearty appetites, and twice a day the families gathered in walnut-paneled dining rooms for enormous dinners that began with tomatoes stuffed with caviar and anchovies, continued through delicious clear soups, to roasts “with the most beautiful spinach,” to fruits and cheeses and red wine. After meals, while the gentlemen lingered over more cigars and business talk, the ladies retired to the drawing room to sit on plush-covered ottomans and discuss what they had just eaten. One encountered many of the same features in most of these rooms—the

whatnot in the corner with its collection of Dresden figurines, the gold-fringed lamp supported by a ring-a-rosy of bronze cherubs, the marble-topped table crowded with photographs, the palm tree in the Sevres pot, and the climax of every such drawing room, the family portraits gazing solemnly from the walls in heavy gilt frames suspended by velvet ropes: the children in their long ringlets, standing stiffly in black velvet dresses, their faces grave above white lace collars, posed with birds, Bibles, or hoops in their hands. The houses might have been “ugly,” but they were ugly to a point of Victorian perfection.

From the drawing room, it would soon be time for the little walk among the hydrangeas again, that walk that was so good for the overtaxed liver, and which gave one an appetite for the next meal. At night one retired early—there were few late parties—between fine linen sheets in a bedroom that smelled of the best French soaps, lavender sachet, and sea air.

The seemliness of Elberon’s summer panorama was hardly ever broken by an untoward event, or, indeed, by undue jollity—as once happened when a hotel in Allenhurst which did not accept Jews caught fire and burned to the ground. While it blazed, a number of well-connected German Jewish children stood nearby and cheered.

In Elberon the Seligman family always seemed to manage to have the most distinguished dinner and weekend guests, particularly favoring celebrities from the worlds of politics and government in Washington. At one of the Seligman Saturdays, it was never a surprise to find a former U.S. President, a Supreme Court Justice, several Senators and a Congressman or two. The Seligman family’s old friend Grant had, at their suggestion, bought a summer home at Long Branch and was a frequent, if somewhat unreliable, guest.* President Garfield was another Seligman friend. When Garfield was shot less than three months after his inauguration, he was taken to a cottage in Elberon where Jesse Seligman—“with,” as Postmaster General Thomas Lane later recalled, “that thoughtful consideration and tenderness which distinguished the man”—opened his house to the official family of the dying President. “The Seligman family,” said another observer at the time, “displayed the closest American equivalent of the European concept of *noblesse oblige*.”

And certainly at some point during these great Elberon years New York’s German Jewish financiers and their families had begun to think of

themselves as an American aristocracy of a certain sort. With their moral tone and their emphasis on family, they had begun to regard themselves as perhaps just a little bit “better” than “the butterflies” of Newport.

In 1892 the Seligmans had a visit from a true European aristocrat. He was Prince André Poniatowsky, a nephew of King Stanislaus of Poland. He called on the Seligmans in New York to open an account, and he noted that their offices were “very much like those of the bankers in the City of London, of great simplicity, located on the first floor of the Mills Building, in those days the largest building of that type in New York. It was of no special architectural style, but, as the British say ‘substantial.’” Here, the Prince wrote, the Seligmans “received me immediately and with a courtesy that demonstrated to me on what complimentary terms their Paris house had written to them about me.”

Jesse Seligman was in Europe that summer, and so Isaac Newton Seligman, Joseph’s son, took over entertaining and smoothing the way for the Prince. After opening his account, the Prince asked Isaac whether there were any other businessmen in the United States who might be helpful to him, and Isaac

responded with a rapidity of decision characteristic of businessmen the first of this type I met personally. With a few words he outlined to me what course of procedure to adopt and which people to see. While I was trying to express my appreciation to him, he held in one hand the telephone through which he arranged a meeting for the same day ... while with the other hand he was ringing the bell for a stenographer, to whom he dictated a letter of introduction accrediting me in Chicago to Mr. Lyman Gage, President of the Bank that was their correspondent in that city.*

Saying, “Come have a bite,” Isaac took the Prince to lunch on the top floor of the Mills Building, “where there was a sort of grillroom reserved for the tenants and the owner of the place,” and introduced the Prince to the other Seligman partners. Here, the Prince suspected, the partners were in psychic financial communication with one another. By Isaac’s manner toward him, the others were able to judge the exact size and importance of the Prince’s account.

To explain my unexpected presence to four Christians seated around a table, it would have been necessary to advise each of them successively that my letters of introduction had been signed by So-and-So, that I had important matters to cable to Paris, and heaven knows what else! Four Christians, I said, but I should have specified the denomination, since for four Protestants these hints would not have been enough.

But in the presence of the Jewish bankers the Prince found no such tiresome need to offer his credentials.

Words were superfluous; the attitude of the head of the firm amply sufficed. His partners now knew as much about me as he did. They had watched him from the moment we sat down, and from his expression had gauged the precise degree of consideration to which he judged me entitled. I suspect, in fact, that if it had been a question of a bank statement, each partner could have scribbled the exact amount on the tablecloth without appreciably deviating from his senior's estimate.

This ability to communicate without words the Prince ascribes to something with which "nature seems to have wished to compensate this astonishing race for the insecurity against which it has struggled for centuries by endowing it with an ability, which escapes us, to understand each other in silence."

The Prince was also relieved to find that the Seligman partners did not appear to be overawed by the fact that they were lunching with royalty. "I felt in them," he wrote, "a shade—oh, scarcely perceptible!—of that reserve which a name and title had already earned for me, and for many years would earn for me, in the presence of businessmen, who automatically thought of me as a personality." But this scarcely perceptible shade of deference was not enough to be off-putting.

Isaac invited his Highness to spend a weekend with the Seligmans at the Jersey shore, and, at the outset at least, the Prince was not at all sure what he was getting into. On the ferryboat crossing, he wrote: "As soon as we left New York, the iced drinks circulated on the deck, and with more avidity than prudence I accepted the offer Seligman made me of sarsaparilla, a hygienic drink, something like a cross between beer and a mouthwash." But

as soon as the boat had docked at Elberon the Prince began to see what New York's German Jewish society was all about. He realized that he had entered a special world not quite like anything he had ever seen before in America or on the Continent. It may not have been an aristocracy, precisely, that the Prince encountered in Elberon, but it was a world of grace and ease and bonhomie which captivated him completely and haunted him for years to come. Years later he reminisced that he met people that weekend "of whom no counterpart then existed in Europe, and probably no longer exists in America."

This is what the Prince's wondering eyes beheld:

Upon the arrival of the boat, a large number of carriages, mostly driven by wives or daughters, came to pick up the passengers, whose residences spread out for several miles along the coast, and also inland, as was the case with the Seligman's, whose house faced Rumson Road.

Isaac Seligman's wife was a daughter of Mr. Loeb, founder and partner of the house of Kuhn, Loeb, already well-known at this time but eventually to take on world importance. They had one child, then three or four years old, whom I unwittingly disappointed at breakfast when he saw that I was not wearing a crown.

The house was simplicity itself—comfortable, of course, but without any show. Of brick and wood painted white, brightened by green shutters, it must have had four or five bedrooms, a bathroom—possibly two, but I doubt it—a dining room, and a drawing room giving on a porch where one spent most of the time....

The next day I was able to see that the neighboring houses, of much the same style and size, were occupied by more or less distant members of the family. To the left, next to Isaac Seligman's, an almost identical house was occupied by his sister Mrs. Hellman, with whom we dined that evening—a charming woman, whose husband was the brother of the head of the Seligman firm in Paris.... To the right lived an older sister of Mrs. Seligman, who had married Jacob Schiff ... a little farther along, Mrs. Seligman's and Mrs. Schiff's mother, Mrs. Loeb, whose husband was in Europe that year, lived in a considerably larger house with the youngest of the three sisters, Nina, a charming girl and an excellent musician, who later married Paul Warburg....

Finally, still farther off, on the seashore, lived a brother, David Seligman, with his wife and daughters, of whom one, Mrs. van Heukelom, resides in Paris today, and the other, Mrs. Lewisohn, comes to Cannes every year.

In each of these households, the male servants were limited to a coachman, generally a Negro, who took care of the horses, and a gardener. Otherwise the servants were women—cooks and housemaids.

If after more than forty years I can so distinctly recall the circumstances in which the numerous members of this family lived, it is because I was profoundly surprised at the time by the contrast that their private lives offered to those of most bankers and businessmen of Anglo-Saxon ancestry whom I met in America that year. In Wall Street, their financial power placed them all on an almost equal level with the big Anglo-Saxon bankers.

Now the Prince made a particularly significant point about the Jewish bankers:

Money in itself, however, had no significance for them outside of business. Any observer, listening to their talk during leisure hours would have taken them for good *rentiers*, given to sport, literature, art, and especially to music, who contributed generously to charity and still more to the finances of their political party, and, above all, were devoted to family life with an intensity to be met with today only in the French provinces.

The Prince kept trying to put his finger on just what it was that was special and appealing about these German Jewish families, and concluded that they reminded him most of French provincials: “Moreover, apart from their taste for sport, the men’s private lives resembled rather closely those of the heads of the old banking houses of Lyon.” (The Prince’s repeated emphasis on “sport” is a little puzzling. Some tennis was played at Elberon, and a bit of croquet, and there was a good deal of walking. But in 1892 there were as yet no real “sportsmen” in the crowd. The Prince was probably overinfluenced by oarsman Ike Seligman, who was an exception.)

The Prince found the atmosphere of the crowd foreign—small-town European—yet very American:

In the preceding generation, the father and the uncle, the founders of the firm, had played a major role in politics ... the men of this generation had inherited the business and worked to keep it going.... Born in the United States, they had breathed the invigorating air of that country at an early age, and their childhood, like their adolescence, was patterned after the current model of the “American College Man” ... imbued with confidence in the future of his country as well as pride in the glory of its past. It was a rather limited past at the time, but because of that very fact so much closer, more vital, and more to be cherished. With the most sincere emotion, they spoke to me of the heroes of the War of Independence as well as those of the Civil War—the first epic antedating the selection of this new country by their parents—for, excellent citizens that they were, they had preserved an affinity for preceding events through legends with which their mothers had rocked them to sleep in their childhood, and which had later jelled at college with the study of Goethe, Schiller, and Heine.

Prince Poniatowsky never visited Newport, but it is hardly possible that he would have found it as beguiling a place as he found Elberon to be. Clearly the nobleman felt very much at home there. Yet this is the same stretch of Jersey shore that critic Edmund Wilson, who grew up near Deal, has called a resort “of the second-rate rich.”

On Monday morning, still starry-eyed, the Prince returned to New York and, that evening, was taken to dinner at the Knickerbocker Club. Over dinner he happened to mention the delightful weekend he had spent with the Seligmans at Elberon. A ghastly hush fell on the table, and the Prince began to grasp the social facts of life that existed in New York. After dinner he was taken aside by one of the club’s members who,

with a little embarrassment, indicated his surprise at seeing me associate with Jewish families outside of business hours. Very much surprised myself, I listened to his description of the worldly conventions that kept Israelites away from the “inner circle,” no matter what their merits, their culture, or the outstanding roles they might

have played in the development of the country! There was on his part neither passion nor animosity. He talked to me as though he were making a statement of facts, just as he might have briefed me on the fundamental differences between the Republican and Democratic parties.

But the Prince was a prince, and was not to be put down by a stuffy clubman. "I must undoubtedly have scandalized him," he writes,

when I told him that I had accepted an invitation to go back the following weekend, this time to Mrs. Hellman's home, and that I could not and did not wish to change this plan—first, because I had met some particularly interesting people there, and, more important, being a foreigner in this country, I did not feel justified in changing rules that I had followed up to now in this connection. Whether in France or in England, I had always maintained the most cordial social relations with the Rothschilds and the families of certain Jewish bankers with whom I had business associations, and I really had no reason to behave differently in the present case.

In the face of this coolly royal response, the American clubman turned and walked muttering away.

* Poor old Grant, who had long since given up marching in temperance parades, had always wanted to be a capitalist. After leaving the White House, he set himself up, with the Seligmans' help, as an investment banker in partnership with a glib young fellow named Ferdinand Ward, whose seemingly Midas touch had earned him the label of "the young Napoleon of Wall Street. In 1884 Ward told Grant that the Marine National Bank, in which Grant & Ward had deposits, was in trouble and needed \$300,000 for one day only. Again with the Seligmans' help, Grant managed to raise half this amount. Ward pocketed it and disappeared. Three days later, the Marine National closed as a result of overdrafts by Grant & Ward, and it soon turned out that Ward had embezzled more than \$2 million from the firm and that its books showed \$27 million in nonexistent assets. Once more, the Seligmans came to the aid of their old card-playing friend from Watertown days, and gave him funds enough to live comfortably until he had

completed his memoirs and died. Grant's *Memoirs*, of course, finally made his estate rich, and helped pay for his famous and imposing tomb.

* Once more the Seligmans were displaying their uncanny way of getting to know the right people. Their friend Lyman Gage later became Secretary of the Treasury under President McKinley.

THE GUGGENHEIM-LEWISOHN BATTLE

After meeting Adolph Lewisohn, a New York businessman once commented, “I guess his brother Leonard must be the smart one.” A few weeks later, he met Leonard Lewisohn. Following this meeting he said, “No, I guess Adolph is the smart one.”

Neither of the Lewisohns was a Schiff-like financial genius. But they had gone about the business of getting rich with diligence, and had the assistance of a considerable amount of luck. By the 1890’s the brothers were considered copper kings—one of their mines had paid \$35 million in dividends alone—and the impression one gathers of them at this point is that they had ceased caring about making money. Adolph himself once said, “I made as much money as I wanted to make, and then I stopped.”

Having stopped, he started to spend, and here again he was the opposite of tight-fisted Mr. Schiff. He bought the E. H. Harriman mansion at 881 Fifth Avenue, a huge place at Elberon, and a hilltop castle in Westchester County, and quickly began filling all these places with friends, flowers, coolers of champagne, pretty women, and collections of precious stones in lighted cases. Though short and round and myopic—he never quite *looked* the part—Adolph Lewisohn became the crowd’s first certifiable playboy.

His approach to life was inevitably reflected in his approach to business. In 1898 Adolph and his brother decided to join forces with William Rockefeller and Henry H. Rogers, one of the guiding lights of Rockefeller’s Standard Oil, to form, with some five million dollars’ capital, the United Metals Selling Company. The Lewisohn contribution to this combine consisted of their Perth Amboy copper works and all the copper interests of

Lewisohn Brothers. The Rockefeller-Rogers group contributed the Amalgamated Copper Company, which controlled Anaconda and other copper producers. Adolph Lewisohn was made president of this trust, and Rogers' son-in-law became treasurer. The merger was almost immediately successful, and soon 55 percent of all the copper produced in the United States was being sold by the United Metals Selling Company.

The success of the selling trust led Adolph to the next step—the formation of a smelting trust. Including again the Rockefeller-Rogers group, this was a far more ambitious project with a capitalization of over \$100 million. It was called the American Smelting & Refining Company, and it represented a merger of twenty-three different smelting concerns. Clearly, this was a trust designed to dominate the American mining scene—to give Rockefeller interests virtual control of everything under American soil, with Adolph and Leonard Lewisohn riding along as very important hitchhikers. There was only one difficulty. The Guggenheim interests, when asked to join the American Smelting & Refining Company, politely declined. It was one of old Meyer's strictest rules: Guggenheim smelters must not be allowed out of the family. Perhaps Adolph Lewisohn felt, at this point, that he had already made as much money as he "needed," and was ready to stop. In any case, he seems not to have grasped the importance of the Guggenheims' refusal to become part of his merger, and to have been satisfied with their assurances that they would act "in harmony."

With the formation of their Guggenheim Exploration Company, the family had entered upon its most ambitious era. Its aim was to corner the best mines in North America in a great sweep from South to North, starting in Mexico and moving across the hemisphere through the United States, Canada, and Alaska. At the head of this vast plan was the most ambitious of Meyer's sons, Daniel, the second-eldest. In the partners' room at Guggenheim Brothers in New York, the various Guggenheim men are immortalized on canvas and, according to a persistent rumor, the square footage of each man's portrait bears a direct relationship to the size of his contribution to the family fortune. Certainly the portrait of "Mr. Dan," as he was called, is rather larger than the others. He was seven years younger than Adolph Lewisohn and in 1899 was still in his peppy mid-forties. He was a little man, like his father, but, according to Bernard Baruch, Daniel Guggenheim was "one of the three small men I've known—the others were

Sam Gompers and Henry Davidson—who sat taller than most men stand. I see Dan ... a little fellow sitting in a big chair and dominating the entire room from it.” His most arresting features were his greenish-blue eyes, which (it seems to have been a prerequisite for turn-of-the-century tycoons) have always been described as “piercing.” Daniel Guggenheim had also decided that he wished to dominate the American mining scene. His companies were earning a million dollars a year, but with the formation of the American Smelting & Refining Company he was on the defensive for the first time. He was less interested in “harmony” than in victory.

At this point, one begins to get the impression of Adolph Lewisohn fiddling while Rome burns. Busy with his parties, he seems to have assumed that the sheer size of his American Smelting & Refining Company, and of his associates, Rockefeller and Rogers, would win the day. Rogers, too, seems to have been under this misapprehension, while Rockefeller, as he often did, was leaving everything to Rogers. Daniel Guggenheim, meanwhile, made several bold moves. He gathered on his team a speculator named William C. Whitney, who had married the sister of Oliver H. Payne, a large Standard Oil stockholder. Whitney had speculative capital to spend. Next, Guggenheim had a stroke of luck. A strike crippled a number of the American Smelting & Refining Company’s properties, making the trust temporarily vulnerable. Dan Guggenheim took advantage of this by heaping lead on the market and forcing the trust to sell below cost. Dan began buying up A S & R shares. In December, 1900, the trust made Dan Guggenheim another offer to buy him out, but this time the trust was leading from weakness. Guggenheim knew it, and made the most of it. He would sell, he announced—for \$45.2 million. And for this price the trust would receive all the Guggenheim properties except the best ones—the Colorado and Mexican mines and the Exploration Company. With the remaining properties came, as well, the Guggenheims. And so, all at once, the American Smelting & Refining Company *was* the Guggenheims. Daniel Guggenheim was president, and four other Guggenheims were on the board of directors. It all happened so fast that it seemed like sleight of hand.

Dazed, Rogers and the Lewisohns realized that the “impossible” had happened. Buying out the Guggenheims, they had, simultaneously, put the Guggenheims in control. The Seligmans were this time delighted; they led

the syndicate that put the A S & R's first issue on the market—an offering at par of \$40 million worth of preferred stock, which sold with great ease.

The Rogers-Lewisohn group now tried to retaliate. They hired David Lamar, one of several speculators who had earned the title, “The Wolf of Wall Street,” and told him to drive the price of A S & R stock down until the company was ruined. But the Guggenheims had Whitney, who was no less powerful a speculator than Lamar, and who was enjoined to do the opposite. The battle between the two speculative wolves, as a result, ended close to a draw. The stock fell only a meager seven points, and the Guggenheims held fast. Next, Rogers and the Lewisohns took their case to the courts. The law certainly seemed to favor the Rogers group, but, when the Guggenheims agreeably offered to compromise, the result of the compromise seemed to further favor the Guggenheims. When the smoke of the lawsuit disappeared, Daniel Guggenheim was Chairman of the board of the American Smelting & Refining Company, his brother Simon was treasurer, and three other brothers were still on the board.

Winning control of the A S & R was the greatest single moment in the career of the Guggenheims. It marked them as mining kings of the world, and, from then on, with the self-generative power that money often seems to have, the Guggenheim fortune mounted. Adolph Lewisohn, meanwhile, still had his A S & R shares. The fact that he had lost a battle didn't seem to matter. At some crucial point in it, he had simply lost interest. He was not that acquisitive. Besides, he was too busy spending and enjoying his own millions.

Financial historians have described the Guggenheim-Lewisohn struggle for control of the copper industry as “a battle of epic proportions.” But, in terms of the amount of fun both families managed to have afterward with their respective fortunes, it seems to have been all a lark.

In New York the waltz and the two-step were gradually being edged off the dance floor by the ragtime tempo of such dances as the turkey trot, the grizzly bear, the bunny hug and the Latin Maxixe. Soon, women's skirts would begin to climb to the accompaniment of whistles, while stuffed birds appeared on umbrella-sized hats. Even “men of distinction,” it was said, were showing up in peg-top pants, two-button shoes and spats.

Some men of distinction, that is. The Guggenheims refused to be fashion leaders and remained conservative, one foot still in the nineteenth century.

The last of Mrs. Astor's great balls were taking place—balls the crowd had no part of anyway. But the balls and Mrs. Astor's friends had served their function. If, while gentile society in New York appeared to be growing more factionalized and self-serving, Jewish society could reassure itself that it was becoming more solid and responsible. "Mrs. Astor's sort of society," wrote one of the crowd, "was quite a different sort of thing from ours. You might say hers was the opposite. Hers was based on publicity, showiness, cruelty, and striving. Ours was based on family, and a quiet enjoyment of the people we loved." This is a reasonable estimate of it. The exclusiveness was mutual and double-edged. If gentile society chose to be flashy, the Jewish crowd would be inconspicuous.

"Inconspicuous," in fact, had become a key concept in German Jewish life. It was to be inconspicuous that Meyer and Barbara Guggenheim, and so many others, had abandoned the orthodoxy of their parents and become Reformed (or less noticeably Jewish) Jews, and had joined the German Jewish Temple Emanu-El. To be inconspicuous, many Guggenheims had scattered themselves in large, but anonymous, brownstones on the less fashionable West Side. Inconspicuousness was synonymous with decorum. Whenever Meyer Guggenheim took his sleigh or carriage through the park, he drove alone, managing the reins himself, avoiding the showiness of a coachman and footmen. There was almost a rule of thumb: the richer one was, the more decorous and inconspicuous one endeavored to be.*

Of course it was a little hard to be inconspicuous with the kind of fortune the Guggenheims were amassing. There was also, in the case of the Guggenheims, that unlucky ability to create scandal. The year 1900 was the dawn, in America, of a new attitude toward love and sex. It was the era of the kept woman, and it was naturally assumed that every man of property had one. (Even those who didn't pretended that they did.) Newspapers devoted yards of chatty print to this or that gentleman of distinguished family who had been "glimpsed looking gay" with this or that "curvaceous miss" or "bit of fluff." Society, gentile and Jewish alike, buzzed with whispers of "love affairs" and "mistresses" and lovers. Even very young children seem to have been affected because little Peggy Guggenheim was only a child of seven when she said to her father, Benjamin, "Papa, you must have a mistress as you stay out so many nights"—and was banished from the dinner table.

Meyer Guggenheim's Barbara died in 1900, and, shortly afterward, who should come forward but a woman named Hanna McNamara, age forty-five, to say that she had been Meyer's mistress for twenty-four years, charging breach of promise and asking \$100,000 in damages. Meyer denied everything, including her assertion that she had been a domestic in the Guggenheim house. He went so far as to offer \$10,000 reward to anyone who had ever seen him in the plaintiff's presence, and the suit was dropped. Still, the episode left the impression that old Meyer, in his seventies, was a rake, and Peggy Guggenheim has said in her autobiography, "When my grandmother died, my grandfather was looked after by his cook. She must have been his mistress." Peggy based this assertion on having once seen the cook "weep copious tears" when old Meyer Guggenheim was ill.

Peggy's father, meanwhile, *did* indeed have a series of mistresses (several of whom made embarrassing demands on his estate when he died). One of these, technically titled his "masseur," lived in his New York house; Benjamin's lady friends were apparently tolerated by his wife Florette. Another was the Marquise de Cerutti, whom he kept in Paris and always referred to as "T.M." (for The Marquise). Once, taking their regular morning walk in the Bois de Boulogne, Ben and Florette Guggenheim encountered T.M. out walking also. She was wearing an elegant suit made entirely of baby lamb fur, and Florette scolded Ben for being so extravagant. "You are quite right, my dear," said Benjamin and, to do the proper thing, gave her the money to buy an identical lamb suit of her own. (A practical woman, Florette took the money and used it to add to her portfolio of stocks.) Though the rest of the crowd—particularly Florette's family, the Seligmans—was aghast at Ben Guggenheim's carryings on, he rather enjoyed his reputation as a philanderer. He once told a fourteen-year-old nephew, "Never make love to a woman before breakfast for two reasons. One, it's tiring. Two, you may meet someone else during the day that you like better."

For all this jaunty talk, Ben was not so tolerant of the activities of his brother William, the last of Meyer's sons, who has been described as "just one Guggenheim too many," and also as "the handsomest of the boys." Certainly one of Will's problems was his feeling that he was a leftover Guggenheim, and also his conviction that he did not *look* Jewish. He began to nourish a fantasy that he was not a Jew, and somewhere along the line

invented another identity for himself, whom he named Gatenby Williams. It was hard to say whether Will Guggenheim admired Gatenby Williams more than Gatenby Williams admired Will Guggenheim; they were lifelong fans of each other. In fact, Gatenby wrote an appreciative book about Will, “in collaboration with Charles Monroe Heath,” in which Gatenby said of Will that all the Guggenheim brothers “except Benjamin and himself were dark,” and that anyone seeing Will’s “light complexion and the cast of his features ... would not have surmised his Semitic ancestry.” Will, says Gatenby, “was a nice-appearing young man.... Well proportioned ... he carried himself erect and with dignity. His hands were expressive, the gestures indicating refinement.... He dressed neatly.... His eyes were a grayish-blue; his lips met in an even line, yet they seemed extraordinarily sensitive, belying the arduous activities and responsibilities that had long been his.”

One of Will’s activities and responsibilities that Gatenby Williams kindly does not mention was Will’s marriage in 1900 to Mrs. Grace Brown Herbert, a divorcee from California. Will brought his bride proudly home to his father and brothers, who immediately recognized her as “the fancy woman of a prominent New Yorker.” The Guggenheims presented Will with an ultimatum: get rid of Grace or be disinherited.

It cost the family \$78,000 in cash and a trip to Illinois for Grace’s divorce where, it was hoped, the scandal would not reach the New York newspapers (it did), and even that wasn’t the end. Will married again, had a child, and Grace reappeared, suing to annul the divorce on the grounds of fraud, saying neither she nor Will had been residents of Illinois at the time. Had Grace won this action, she would have made Will not only a party to fraud but a bigamist, and would have illegitimized his son. Fortunately, Grace’s case was thrown out without further cost to the Guggenheims.

When Gatenby Williams’ book, *William Guggenheim: The Story of an Adventurous Career*, was published, a few people noticed that the publisher, the Lone Voice Publishing Company, had the same address, 3 Riverside Drive, as Will Guggenheim. Pride of authorship prevailed when Will prepared his *Who’s Who* biography, however, and Will’s paragraph read: “Author: William Guggenheim (under pseudonym Gatenby Williams).”

Some Guggenheims were less inconspicuous than others. Benjamin Guggenheim bought an elaborate house at Fifth Avenue and Seventy-second Street which featured a marble entrance hall with a fountain and, on

a wall facing the double front door, a stuffed American bald eagle, its wings spread as if in full flight, secured to the marble wall with brass chains. The eagle was Mr. Guggenheim's own touch. He had shot it himself one August at his place in the Adirondacks. Whenever it was pointed out to him that it was against the law to shoot American bald eagles, and also to stuff them, he protested that *he* had never been told of such a law, and that when he had taken the bird to the taxidermist the man had said simply, "Whatever you say, Mr. Guggenheim!"

Upstairs was the "Louis Seize Parlor," decorated with tall mirrors, tapestried walls and tapestried furniture, along with a concert grand piano. But on the floor was a huge bearskin rug with its mouth open in a vicious snarl. Its teeth were forever falling out, and occasionally its tongue, which was disconcerting, but Mr. Guggenheim liked the bear also, and so it stayed amid the Louis XVI gilt chairs and tables. The central parlor, where Mrs. Guggenheim entertained her lady friends at tea, was decorated with an enormous floor-to-ceiling tapestry depicting the triumphant entry of Alexander the Great into Rome.

The Guggenheims never appeared able to do things with quite the *ease*—or at least the attempt at ease—that others in the crowd did. When they traveled, for instance, the Guggenheims never seemed to understand tipping. As they moved from one grand European spa to the next, vengeful porters and bellhops drew meaningful symbols in chalk on the Guggenheim trunks and suitcases, and the Guggenheims never realized why their luggage was always being dropped and crushed and lost.

Benjamin Guggenheim was the Guggenheim on the *Titanic* who refused a weeping steward's offer of a life vest and, instead, went to his cabin and dressed in his evening clothes in order to go down like a gentleman. He insisted, furthermore, that his young valet do the same and, as a woman was entering one of the lifeboats, Ben Guggenheim placed a note in her hand which read: "If anything should happen to me, tell my wife I've done my best in doing my duty."*

But had he done his best? A persistent piece of Guggenheim gossip has it that a surviving *Titanic* passenger was traveling as "Mrs. Benjamin Guggenheim," and she has been identified as "a young blond singer." The family has repeatedly pointed out that the *Titanic's* passenger list contained no such name. Yet Peggy Guggenheim has spoken of the shock at going to

the pier to meet the survivors on the *Carpathia*, still not knowing that her father was dead, and watching her father's mistress descend the gangplank.

Ben's brother Will (or "Gatenby Williams") did not fare much better where women and notoriety were concerned. After separating from his second wife, Will "reverted to his old love, the theatre, taking on a succession of showgirls as protégés." His protégés often held informal press conferences, and one of these young ladies, an actress playing in *Ballyhoo*, told reporters she had met Will because "I was reading a copy of the *Literary Digest* and that caught his eye." When Will died, his entire fortune was bequeathed to "Miss America" of 1929, "Miss Connecticut" of 1930, and two other showgirls of roughly the same vintage. The papers speculated avidly on how many millions the four girls would divide, but, alas, Will's second wife, whom he had neglected to divorce, had a claim on the estate. The estate itself, furthermore, had been considerably depleted by Will's spending. The four young ladies divided only \$5,229.

But the most spectacular playboy of all the Guggenheims was Dan Guggenheim's son, Meyer Robert. M. Robert had a total of four wives and, at one point, upon marrying the second one, became a Roman Catholic. ("I'm delighted," said Dan Guggenheim at the time. "My son has always been a very bad Jew. I hope they'll make a better Catholic of him.") He did not, in any case, remain a Catholic long. M. Robert was briefly the American Ambassador to Portugal. When he was sent home, *persona non grata*, by the Portuguese Government, he laughed off the whole thing, saying that it was all because he had accidentally dropped a teaspoon down the front of a Portuguese lady's dress. Witnesses to the event, however, said that the dropped teaspoon would not have got Robert Guggenheim tossed out of Portugal if only he had not been so insistent on going after the silverware with his hands. His fourth wife was the well-known Washington hostess, Polly Guggenheim, now Mrs. John A. Logan, who took her husband's waywardness with tolerant good humor. After Robert Guggenheim's death, his name popped up in the papers again. The federal government wanted to collect some \$169,548 in taxes, which, it claimed, should have been paid on gifts of cash, jewelry, and "a comparatively modest home in Georgetown" made to "an unidentified woman friend."

At that point, it was remembered that M. Robert Guggenheim had died one evening while getting into a taxi in front of a comparatively modest

home in Georgetown, after dining with a friend there.

*And for some intensely practical reasons. The 1900 Cudahy kidnapping, with its then-record ransom demand of \$25,000, had been a grim reminder of what could happen if one made too much point of being rich.

* A more touching example of courage in the crowd was provided by Mr. and Mrs. Isidor Straus, who each refused, on that terrible night, to enter a lifeboat without the other, and went down together.

MONSIEUR JOURNET'S NIGHTGOWN

At least two important media for the communication of social news had come into being in New York by 1900, neither of which was entirely reliable. One was a weekly gossip sheet called *Town Topics*. The other was the telephone. *Town Topics* was devoted almost entirely to the shocking carryings on of Vanderbilts, Webbs, Whitneys, Goelets, Goulds, Morgans, Huntingtons, Schwabs, and Ryans. The publication dramatized the fact that to be “in society” had certain drawbacks, for *Town Topics* earned considerable revenue through simple extortion; if a Vanderbilt, Webb, Whitney, Goelet, Gould, Morgan, Huntington, Schwab, or Ryan did not want his latest indiscretion printed, he had to pay up. Because they were not considered society, the families of the crowd were mercifully spared (though Jimmie Speyer was once approached by a *Town Topics* “representative,” and gallantly said, “I don’t care what you write about me, as long as you don’t say anything disagreeable about my wife.” He was left alone).

Meanwhile, thanks to the telephone, gossip traveled faster and more efficiently than ever before. Most women of the era spent at least two-thirds of each morning on the telephone, and many felt unable to start their day until the telephoning was done. And all at once (or so it seemed), uptown circuits were busy from nine to noon with talk of mistresses, lovers, showgirls, and scandal. Frieda Schiff Warburg, her children remember, “used to look as if she had been drawn through a knothole” when she emerged from her morning telephoning. And well she might have.

Just how many of the romances and harrowing tales were real and how many were imagined is, obviously, open to great question. The word “mistress” had become so commonplace that any woman a man was seen

speaking to at a Schiff Friday night could be labeled his mistress by Saturday morning. One day, Mrs. Alfred Liebmann, the wife of the brewer, was lunching with her friend Hulda Lashanska, the concert singer. Girlishly, Mlle. Lashanska told Mrs. Liebmann when they met that they might be joined by “a beau.” Who should show up but the glamorous “Black Prince”—Felix Warburg! Scandal! News of that affair and “mistress” filled the telephone hours for days afterward. But, since it had been an in-the-crowd lunch, news of it never got outside. (And Lashanska, meanwhile, was a good friend of Frieda Warburg’s also, which made it seem like a tempest in a teapot.)

Sometimes, as was the custom of the era, when divorce was “not done” except in a Guggenheim-like emergency, the mistress did indeed join the household and become, in Mary McCarthy’s phrase, “a friend of the family.” At other times this proved difficult, and there were permanently bruised feelings all around. There were husbands and wives who, though they traveled and entertained together, never spoke, and there were couples who, even though they went to the same dinner parties, were not on speaking terms with other couples over affairs of the heart.

There was one much-liked member of the crowd whose wife, it was suddenly announced, had taken a lover, himself a married man. The affair eventually terminated itself, and, some time later, the young wife died. Though this might have been considered the end of things, it wasn’t, and a family conference was called to see what should be done about the dead wife’s shocking treatment of her husband while living. Her desk was searched and, sure enough, certain letters turned up which “proved” her guilt. These were then bundled up and shipped—not to their sender but to his wife as “evidence” of his behavior. It was then deemed necessary to tell the dead wife’s young children of their mother’s transgressions. These exchanges of information were harsh, but also protective, for now where else could the talk fly? It had flown full circle, and all “within the family.”

Not all affairs could be terminated with such surgical neatness, as was demonstrated by another unfortunate “family problem,” involving, of all people, the Seligmans. By the turn of the century very little scandal had attached itself to that elegant and redoubtable family, though they had been around longer than anybody else. They had their “peculiar branch,” but

otherwise they seemed serenely above the tribulations certain others had to endure. In fact, it didn't seem fair, and the Seligmans were resented for this.

In 1900 the Seligman veneer began to crack. Alfred Lincoln Seligman, Joseph's fifth and last son, was—like a number of his brothers and cousins, like Solomon's two sons Jim and Morris Loeb, and like Ben and Will Guggenheim—not interested in business, and was more disposed to be a gentleman of leisure. Alfred was an easygoing, soft-spoken fellow with a dilettantish interest in the arts. He played the cello nicely, and was also an amateur sculptor. He was fond of children, though he and his wife had none, and gave a charming monument to New York, a bronze statue in Morningside Park, at 114th Street, which depicts a fawn cowering under a rock while a fierce bear crouches above. The inscription reads:

To the children of New York City,
Given by Alfred Lincoln Seligman,
Vice-President of the National Highways Protection Society,
and erected under their auspices, 1914

The fawn's position is symbolic of the position Alfred found himself in fourteen years earlier. He was married to the former Florine Arnold, and he and his wife liked to consider themselves "Bohemian." They loved to entertain artists, writers, composers, and musicians in their big apartment in the old Murray Hill Hotel. And, wrote the late George S. Hellman in an unpublished account of the Seligmans, "Alfred's kind heart beat with a childish faith in the goodness of human nature—a faith so childish, so unbelievably trustful, that it was to lead to the first profound tragedy of the Seligman family." (Mr. Hellman is a bit of a romantic when it comes to his Seligman relatives.)

The year 1901, as old New Yorkers will remember, was the year of the great fire in the Murray Hill Hotel. The building was rocked with a series of violent explosions, the wounded and dying lay in the corridors, and much of the hotel was destroyed. But, for some reason, the Forty-first Street side of the building was completely untouched by the fire, and Alfred's and Florine's apartment was in this northern side. Alfred was out of the building when the fire occurred, but a Seligman nephew happened to be in the neighborhood and, explaining that he had a relative who lived in the

building, he was allowed through the fire lines to check on Florine. (Mr. Hellman does not say that he was this nephew but, from the evidence he presents, this seems likely.) “He found Florine,” writes Mr. Hellman, “seated in her drawing-room. She was alone, looking lovelier than ever, with a tinge of excitement heightening the color of her peach-blossom cheeks.” (She was, in other words, exercising perfect Seligman composure in the crisis, and the “tinge of excitement” can be excused by the fact that she was in a burning building, and the noise of the blasts, the screech of the sirens, and the screams of the dying must have been perturbing.) The gallant Mr. Hellman cannot resist adding at this point, “Fair-haired, blue-eyed, perfect nose and mouth, Florine Arnold was one of the most beautiful of New York women.”

Graciously, beautiful Florine Arnold Seligman arose from her chair, thanked her young nephew for so considerately dropping by—“But as you can see, I’m perfectly well”—and then said, almost gaily, “I want to show you how terrific the explosions were!”

She then led him through her own bedroom, into an adjoining bedroom, and said, “Look what’s happened to Monsieur Journet’s nightgown!”

(A nightgown, Mr. Hellman explains, is what men of the period wore instead of pajamas.)

The nephew looked at the nightgown in question. Clearly male, it had been flung, by the force of the blast, from the surface of the bed where it had obviously been lying, and now hung from the ceiling over the bed, draped across a crystal chandelier. But the young nephew was less impressed by this phenomenon than by the news that Monsieur Journet occupied a bedroom in the Seligman apartment next door to Mrs. Seligman’s, while Mr. Seligman’s bedroom was across the hall beyond the sitting room.

Monsieur Journet was Marcel Journet, a handsome French opera singer, who was filling an engagement at the Metropolitan Opera House at the time.

“Perfectly astonishing,” murmured the young nephew, recalling, as he said this, certain related facts. Alfred and Florine Seligman had recently returned from California, traveling with Journet, and they were now due to leave for Europe soon, again accompanied by M. Journet. Clearly, a

“situation” had developed that required the most delicate handling by the family.

In the days that followed the fire, Florine continued to tell the story of the remarkable flying nightgown, taking visitors into Journet’s bedroom to see where it had happened, oblivious, apparently, of the appearances of the thing. More and more eyebrows were raised. Finally, the story reached the ears of Alfred’s older brother Isaac and their sister Frances, and it was decided that a confidential talk with Alfred was in order.

“Of course, Alfred,” the older Seligmans said, “we are all very fond of Florine, and we *know* there’s nothing wrong. But we think you have been somewhat ... indiscreet.”

Alfred’s reaction was so shocked that the others were convinced he was sincere when he cried, “I don’t know what you’re talking about!”

Isaac was more specific. “Well, you’ve recently come back from California, where you were traveling with Journet. Now he has a room in your apartment. Next Saturday you are going to Europe together. People are beginning to talk.”

“You aren’t implying—” gasped Alfred.

“Of course not,” said Isaac. “But there is talk, and you should take that into account. It’s embarrassing for all of us.”

“But, Ike,” said Alfred, “you don’t quite understand. I’m just as much devoted to Journet as Florine is.”

“Certainly,” said Isaac a little stiffly, “and I like him very much too. But people are gossiping more than you realize.”

Isaac then went on to point out a solution. Alfred was to go home, without mentioning their conversation, and tell Florine that “the press of business” would mean that he could not take the Saturday boat to Europe. Journet would depart alone. The talk would stop. With obvious reluctance, Alfred agreed.

When he approached Florine with the proposed change in plans, Florine became agitated. She was counting on the trip. She was tired of New York and had to get to Europe. It was her favorite boat. She didn’t believe the trumped-up story about the “press of business.” Alfred had no “business.” Isaac ran the investment house. The more she protested, the more excited she became.

Finally, Alfred said flatly, “Well, whether you like it or not, I’ve decided that we’re not sailing Saturday.”

“*We are!*” she screamed. “At least *I* am!” She burst into tears and cried, “You might as well know! *Journet is my lover!*”

Thunderstruck, Alfred Seligman walked out of the Murray Hill Hotel. He went to live with his mother, who then shared a house with his sister Frances, and for months was sunk in a terrible depression. He would sit for hours in his chair, refusing to speak or leave the house, staring into space, seeing no one. At times, tears would well in his eyes.

Meanwhile, the Seligman family took sides. Frances, though she loved Alfred, blamed her brother for his laxness and his blindness. Florine’s aunt, who was married to one of James Seligman’s sons, also insisted it was Alfred’s fault. Edwin Seligman, to save the good name of the family, led a sturdy band of Seligmans who blamed Florine.

A deep breach between the James and Joseph branches of the family—which had begun over religion, and James’s insistence that a rabbi speak at Joseph’s grave, and which had continued over the “family skeleton” of James’s mistress—widened and deepened as that most terrible of things was contemplated: a Seligman divorce. “One could see it happening to people like the Googs,” wrote Henriette Hellman Seligman despairingly, “but not to *us!*”

As the Seligman lawyers began preparing their briefs, fate stepped in. Florine became ill and was rushed to a hospital, where she underwent an emergency operation and then developed blood poisoning. Dying, she summoned Alfred to her side. In tears, she told him that the affair with Journet had been nothing more than an “obsession.” It was, she said, just like his cousin Angeline’s dream of her love affair with the druggist Balch. She begged Alfred to forgive her, but there was really nothing to forgive. She swore that Alfred was the only man she ever loved, and that she had made a will leaving everything she owned to him (which was true, and Alfred, in turn, donated everything she left him to charity). She died in his arms.

Alfred went on with his life, painting, sculpting, playing his cello, working for causes devoted to children’s welfare, and never married again. He was killed, a few years later, in an automobile accident.

Florine was buried in the Seligman mausoleum at Salem Fields. Though he had been specifically forbidden to enter, M. Journet used to manage to visit the mausoleum on each of his trips to America through the years until he died. He always left a small nosegay of flowers at the foot of the marble entablature that bore her name.

Florine's story had a pretty-picture, almost operetta ending. A year later when Albert Seligman's son, Jesse II, shot and killed his wife, who had been "unfaithful," and then killed himself, it was not so pretty.*

Even though it was a murder within the family and "within the crowd," the Seligmans seemed to be having trouble maintaining their "social distinction."

* His remains were not admitted to the Seligman mausoleum, but were, for some reason, to the one belonging to his murdered wife's family—where one would think they would be in even less friendly company.

THE GREAT BATTLE OF 1109 FIFTH AVENUE

In 1904 Jacob Schiff was at the peak of his career. That summer he had met in London with Baron Korekiyo Takahashi, Financial Commissioner of the Japanese Government and president of the Yokohama Specie Bank. At the heart of their meeting was Japan's need to raise at least five million pounds sterling—in days when the British pound was worth some six U.S. dollars—to finance its war with Russia. Britain was Japan's political and commercial ally, but now London bankers were having difficulty supplying Japan with war financing, and in New York Japan's chances of winning the war were considered remote. For several days Schiff and Takahashi discussed Japan's problems. The meeting ended with Schiff's agreement to handle the loan. It was, as Frieda wrote, "not so much my father's interest in Japan, but rather his hatred of Imperial Russia and its anti-Semitic policies, that prompted him to take this great financial risk."

Schiff had been outraged by the Czarist pogroms, and had made a number of public statements in which he had called the Russian Government "the enemy of mankind," and in which he had urged an armed revolution against the Czar. Takahashi quotes Schiff as saying, "A system of government ... capable of such cruelties and outrages at home as well as in foreign relations must be overhauled from the foundations up in the interests of the oppressed race, the Russian people, and the world at large ... and taught an object lesson." Now Schiff set about singlehandedly to abet this overhauling process by helping Japan win her war.

In his new position of peerdom with his old adversary, J. P. Morgan, Schiff approached both Morgan and George F. Baker of the First National

Bank, inviting them to join in the loan. When they agreed, there remained only the Rockefeller-Stillman interests, and the National City Bank, to be persuaded. With both Schiff and Morgan sponsoring the loan, the National City group quickly agreed to participate also. It was the first time in history that Japan had been able to obtain money outside of London, and it took three massive loans, engineered by Schiff, before Japan was declared the victor in 1905.

Now began a long series of honors bestowed upon Schiff. England had backed Japan too, and King Edward VII invited Schiff to luncheon at Buckingham Palace, where Schiff found the King “an amiable fellow.” Next, the Japanese Emperor asked Schiff to come to Japan and receive one of the Empire’s highest honors, the Second Order of the Sacred Treasure. Schiff was to be given a private audience with the Mikado himself, and lunch at the imperial palace, where, he was pleased to note, “It is the first time the Emperor has invited a foreign private citizen to a repast at the palace, heretofore only foreign princes having been thus honored.” (The more successful he became, the more formal grew his literary style.)

As a great American railroad financier, he was able to move as grandly across continents as he moved across rooms. Leaving New York for San Francisco, on the first leg of the journey, the Schiff party ensconced itself in two private railway cars, plus a baggage and officers’ car. With Mr. and Mrs. Schiff were Ernst Schiff, an unmarried nephew; Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Heidelbach (of the Heidelbach, Ickelheimer Heidelbachs); Mr. and Mrs. Sigmund Neustadt (of Hallgarten & Company); Mr. and Mrs. Henry Budge (Budge had been Mr. Schiff’s partner in his first brokerage business); a personal maid for each lady; and Joseph, the Schiff butler. They were accompanied by ninety-odd pieces of luggage, many of them large trunks. They were apparently cramped because they hitched on a fourth private car, a dining car, in Chicago. As the Schiff train rolled from one railroad line to another, it was ceremoniously greeted by railroad presidents and vice presidents who were keeping track of the progress of the entourage.

Most of the passing landscape Mr. Schiff found uninteresting. But perhaps this was because it was considered proper private-car etiquette to travel with one’s curtains closed. Pausing in Salt Lake City, Schiff wrote that it contained “little of particular note or attraction except the Tabernacle and the Temple, the latter not accessible to those not belonging to the

Mormon Church.” In San Francisco the Heidelbachs received news of an ailing relative and were forced, regretfully, to turn back for New York. The rest of the party boarded the S.S. *Manchuria*, where a large section of first class had been set aside for them.

In Honolulu Mr. Schiff had word that Queen Liliuokalani wished to receive him and his party. Schiff was not one to turn down an invitation from a queen, even though Liliuokalani at that point was only an ex-queen, but there was a small difficulty. The *Manchuria* was scheduled to spend only an hour or two in Hawaii before continuing on to the Orient; the Queen’s invitation was for the following morning. Mr. Schiff took up this problem with the captain, who finally agreed to hold the ship in Hawaii an additional sixteen hours. (How the other passengers on the *Manchuria* felt about the delay is not recorded.)

Even so, it was going to be nip and tuck. The Queen’s invitation was for 9:30 A.M. The Captain had explained that, because of the tides, he could not possibly hold the ship after 10 A.M. And Mr. Schiff, who was nowhere near so secure with steamship companies as he was with railroads, became quite nervous that the boat would sail without him. Jokingly, one of his party suggested that he kidnap a member of the *Manchuria*’s crew and hold him until the audience was over. Schiff thought this an excellent idea and, without more ado, commandeered the *Manchuria*’s captain to escort them to the Queen—“as hostage, in order to be certain not to be left behind,” as he explains in his journal of the trip. Jacob Schiff was not one to fool around with cabin boys.

He found the Queen a “stately looking old brown lady, surrounded by some of her ladies-in-waiting who, we understand, are relatives.” This must have seemed quite appropriate to Schiff, who was surrounded by his own relatives.* It was a little after ten when the party reboarded the ship, which, as Schiff points out, “could not very well have left without us.”

That evening at the captain’s table, where of course the Schiffs sat, Mr. Schiff said, “Captain, will the *Manchuria* be calling at any more ports where there will be kings or queens?”

“No!” the captain replied. “No! No!”

The rest of the trip was unremarkable.

Schiff was a man of will and a man of tradition. Driving to lunch in the Japanese imperial palace, Schiff announced to the Imperial Chief of

Protocol that he wished to propose a toast to the Emperor. In a dither, the Protocol Chief urged him not to, since a toast was a thing “not done” in the Japanese court; the Emperor might misunderstand. Nevertheless, when the guests were seated, Schiff rose and lifted his glass, “To the Emperor. First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen.” To everyone’s relief, when the Schiff statement had been translated, the Emperor looked pleased.

Not all Schiff’s remarks in Japan led to peaceful solutions. At dinner one evening Mr. Schiff found himself seated next to Baron Takahashi’s fifteen-year-old daughter, Wakiko, and, in the course of conversation said to her, through an interpreter, “You must come and visit us in New York some time.” A Schiff statement clearly carried as much weight in Tokyo as it did on Wall Street, for the next morning the Baron bowed himself into the Schiffs’ apartments and said that, though it was highly unusual for a young Japanese girl to leave her home and country at such a tender age, and to undertake such a long and arduous journey to a foreign land, he had, since Mr. Schiff had proved himself such a friend to Japan, agreed to let Wakiko return to New York with the Schiffs, but he truly felt—and he hoped Mr. Schiff would understand—that Wakiko should not visit the Schiffs for longer than three years.

“Mother,” wrote Mr. Schiff in his diary, “believes it somewhat of a responsibility we are undertaking in assuming charge of the responsibility of the girl and her education but we have decided to assume the responsibility.” There is a hint of Schiff hysteria here, for Mr. Schiff was usually too cautious a stylist to use the word “responsibility” three times in one sentence. And what actually happened was that “Mother”—Therese Schiff—hadn’t protested any action of Jacob’s so hotly since he threatened to move her to Riverside Drive. But Mr. Schiff was a man of his word. Wakiko joined the Schiff party, returned to America with them, lived her three years with them, and was educated here.*

Meanwhile, Frieda and Felix Warburg had had, in fairly rapid succession, five children—four of them lively boys—and were beginning to feel crowded in their Seventy-second Street house. They already had, to be sure, quite a comfortable summer place in White Plains. Called “Woodlands,” it was an estate of a mere thirty acres to start, but Felix, who always liked to “square off” his property, enlarged it repeatedly until it composed some six

hundred acres. (Penurious Morris Loeb wanted to call it “Moneysunk.”) It was built in the Tudor style around a large central tower, and it had an indoor swimming pool which was also a hothouse filled with orchids and tropical plants. It had—another idea of Felix’s—the “Presidential benches,” a series of wooden benches, each engraved with the name of a United States President, stretched along five miles of bridle paths. (The Franklin Pierce bench, at a far corner of the property, was forever being stolen by neighbors for firewood.) Felix loved vistas, and cut down great sweeps of the surrounding forest to create them. When Nina and Paul Warburg first saw Woodlands, Nina said that it was lovely, but she liked a water view—to remind her of Koesterberg on the Elbe, where a number of German Warburgs had summer places. Felix immediately ordered another vista cut down, this time all the way through to the golf pond of the Scarsdale Country Club. (Nina liked it so much that she and Paul came to live there, and built their own house on the estate, where Paul built her a beautiful rustic “outdoor study” with a pool of its own.) Felix was a man of sudden enthusiasms. Once Frieda said, “Wouldn’t it be nice to rent two cows so we could have our own milk for the children.” “Oh!” cried Felix, “I’ve always wanted a Guernsey herd.” So they acquired one.* He also laid out a few golf holes on the polo field, which had more or less occurred while he was building his driveway.

Mr. Schiff, however, didn’t like Woodlands. He was probably jealous because Frieda and Felix seemed to enjoy it so much. He became very difficult whenever the young couple tried to stay at Woodlands beyond the second week in June, when he expected them to join him on the Jersey shore. Whenever he came to White Plains, he made disparaging remarks about the place, and used to say, “I can’t wait to have the children breathe the good sea air at Rumson Road.” Also, to make Frieda even more nervous, whenever her father visited Woodlands, things had a way of going wrong—there would be a heat wave and the wells would run dry, or there would be a thunderstorm and the electricity would go off.

But Mr. Schiff’s objections to Woodlands were as nothing compared to the fuss he kicked up over the Warburgs’ new plan, which was to build themselves a new house in the city.

While his father-in-law was traveling in Japan, Felix bought a 100 × 100 piece of land at Fifth Avenue and Ninety-second Street, a particularly

beautiful corner facing the Central Park Reservoir. Felix, with his usual exuberance, liked the Gothic style, and had always admired the old Fletcher house on Seventy-ninth Street and said, "If I ever build a house, I want the architect of that house to design it." The architect of the Fletcher house was C. P. H. Gilbert and, when he had his property, Felix hired him.

It was to be quite a house that Mr. Gilbert designed. The ground floor was to contain a large entrance hall with an adjoining "etching room," to house Felix's print collection, and the kitchen and pantries. On the second floor was a music room built around an Aeolian electric pipe organ for Felix to play; a Red Room to house the Italian paintings, Raphael's "Madonna and Child" among them; a huge conservatory with stained-glass windows; and the formal dining room. On the third floor Gilbert placed a joint sitting room for Frieda and Felix where they would both have desks on which to array family photographs and where they would place their Friday evening candles; a family breakfast room; Frieda's boudoir and bathroom; their joint bedroom; and Felix's dressing room and bath. The fourth was the children's floor with their rooms and schoolroom, and Felix had designed an elaborate electric toy railroad with tracks snaked in and out of the doors through all the rooms on this floor. The fifth floor was taken up with the squash court and guest rooms (and, later, Edward Warburg's art gallery). The sixth floor and the basement were servants' quarters. Felix had also purchased an adjacent lot where he had conceived the idea of building an apartment house, to be used by Warburg relatives, connected to the main house by an umbilical bridge. (This plan, however, never came to be.)

The minute Mr. Schiff heard of the Warburgs' plans to build 1109 Fifth Avenue he flew into one of his terrible rages. The trouble was, nobody seemed to know quite what his objections were. "Perhaps," Frieda said, "he was angry because we hadn't consulted him. Perhaps he felt we were doing it behind his back." At the time, he denied this. The closest he could come to putting his objections into words was to say, "It's conspicuous. It will add to the social anti-Semitism in New York if a young couple build such an ornate house right on Fifth Avenue." But this didn't make much sense. Schiff himself had an ornate house on Fifth Avenue too, just a few blocks to the south, and a new one to boot. He had acquired No. 965, and, when his son married Adele Neustadt, he had given 932 to Morti as a wedding present, who commented, "It's nice to own a house in which I got so many

spankings.” Pacesetter Schiff had, in fact, led the crowd’s march to Fifth Avenue.

As the building of 1109 got under way, it became most difficult for Felix, who had to suffer his father-in-law all day long at the Kuhn, Loeb office. The house became a closed subject between the two men, and the atmosphere between them became icy. At one point, Felix confided to Frieda, “I just don’t think I can go on working with your father under circumstances like these,” and Felix went so far as to go to Schiff and offer his resignation. Mr. Schiff stared at him stonily and said, “If you leave this company, I’ll see to it that you never work anywhere in America again.” It was a sizable threat, and Jacob was a man capable of carrying it out.

The situation was no easier for Frieda. Her father would not discuss the house with her. Though he walked past the site of the construction each Sunday morning with Samuel Sachs, on their way to Montefiore Hospital, where the two men ritually visited patients and checked on the upkeep of one of their favorite charities, when he came to the corner of Ninety-second Street he made a point of turning his head in the opposite direction. Finally, desperate, Frieda said, “Perhaps it’s the fact that it’s Gothic that upsets him so. Perhaps he’d like it better if we changed it to a Renaissance style.” She went to Gilbert with this suggestion, but he pointed out that, since the exterior walls were already built, it was a little late for a change of theme.

The house was completed in the autumn of 1908, a year in the building. Fortunately, the Schiffs were in Europe when it was time for Frieda and Felix to move in, so they were spared having to invite Jacob to take part in this. They decided to move in on their son Frederick’s birthday, October 14. But once in the house Frieda was faced with what might happen when her father returned to New York. She became convinced that he would never speak to her again. The night before he was due to arrive, she could not sleep for worry and, the next morning, was too ill and tired and frightened to go to the pier to meet her parents, as she had always done. Felix went alone.

That afternoon her father came by to see her. He was ushered into 1109 Fifth Avenue and up to her bedroom. He sat on the bed beside her for over an hour, telling her about the summer he had had in Europe, without once mentioning that he was in a new house.

But the next day a note was delivered to Frieda. It said: “Your mother and I wish you much happiness in your new home. Though it looked very complete to me, there must be something you still need, and we hope this check will help toward it.” The note was not signed, but of course the check was. It was for \$25,000.

Certain night watchmen in the Warburg mansion, which is now the Jewish Museum, insist that the house is haunted. A mischievous ghost patrols the galleries at night, rattling the display cases. If so, it is probably the restless shade of Jacob H. Schiff trying to find his daughter.

*In addition to his nephew, he had the Neustadts, who were parents-in-law of his son Morti.

* Wakiko, who died in Japan only recently, for many years corresponded with the Schiff grandchildren she played with as a child, and not too many years ago her own grandchildren visited America, where they played with Schiff’s great-grandchildren.

* And with it a herdsman as flamboyant as Felix, who immediately ordered stationery printed which said, at the top in large letters, “WOODLANDS FARM, WILLIAM B. JONES, SUPERINTENDENT,” and, at the bottom, in very small letters, “Felix M. Warburg, owner.”

“WITTY AND INTERESTING PERSONALITIES”

In 1870 the number of Jews in New York City had been estimated as eighty thousand, or less than 9 percent of the city's population; as such, they were no more than the object of casual curiosity. By 1907 ninety thousand Jews were arriving in the city every year, most of them from Russia and Poland. (Because the Russians and the Poles seemed indistinguishable, they were all grouped as “Russians.”) The Jewish population of the city stood at close to a million, or roughly 25 percent of the total. By 1915 there would be nearly a million and a half, or 28 percent. These statistics presented the Americanized German Jews in New York with the most pressing and painful problem they had ever faced, and a deep rift had developed between the Germans and the Russians, between uptown where the Germans lived, and the Lower East Side.

In Czarist Russia of the 1870's and 1880's, life for the Jews had become intolerable. The vast ghetto known as the Pale of Settlement, which included the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Lithuania, and much of Poland, had become a morass of overpowering poverty, and the situation for Jews who lived outside the Pale was not much better. In the 1880's the tyranny over Jews became legalized under the May Laws, which prohibited Jews from owning or renting land outside towns and cities and discouraged them from living in villages. The increasing economic pressures triggered the “spontaneous” outbreaks of 1881, the massacre at Kishinev in 1903, and the massive and savage pogroms that followed. In 1891 thousands of Jews were expelled without warning from Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kiev, and six years later, when the government seized and monopolized the liquor traffic,

thousands of Jewish innkeepers and restaurateurs were thrown out of business.

One reason for the pogroms, of course, had been the desperate, and largely unsuccessful, attempts of Jewish workers to organize trade and labor unions. In 1897 the General League of Jewish Workers in Russia, Poland, and Lithuania—*Der Algemainer Iddisher Arbeter Bund*—had been organized and, in the next three years, led several hundred strikes of cobblers, tailors, brushmakers, quilters, locksmiths, and weavers who had been working eighteen hours a day for a wage of two to three rubles a week. But many of these strikes were marked by violence, bloodshed, and arrests. In the first years of the twentieth century, thousands of persons were arrested for political reasons, most of them Jews. In 1904 of thirty thousand organized Jewish workers, nearly a sixth were thrown into prisons or exiled to Siberia. The Pale of Settlement had become a hotbed of revolutionary activity. Then the Revolution of 1905 seemed to erase all hope. The only answer was to escape to America, the land of the free.

In the years between 1870 and 1905, more than a third of the Jews of Eastern Europe left their homes. Over 90 percent of these came to the United States, and most of these settled in New York City.

In New York they found a small, established, Americanized colony of German Jewish families who were solid, well tailored, capitalistic in their outlook, and wealthy. They found, in fact, what the Germans themselves had found in the Sephardim fifty years before. The new arrivals from Eastern Europe were ragged, dirt-poor, culturally energetic, toughened by years of torment, idealistic, and socialistic. Aside from the single fact of their common religion, the Germans and the Russians could not have been less alike.

To the older-established Germans, who had acquired the patina of manners and respectability, this vast mass of gruff-voiced, “uncouth, unwashed” Russians who had the temerity to call themselves fellow Jews and therefore brothers was a distinct embarrassment. Newspaper stories of “horrible conditions in the Jewish quarter” on the Lower East Side—with reports of overcrowding in tenements, vermin, garbage, marital disorders, violence, starvation, and crime—were a grievous thorn in the German Jewish side. To be identified as a Jew, along with “those people,” became increasingly irksome. “Those people” were loud, pushy, aggressive—“the

dregs of Europe.” They made a bad name for everybody. In this period Mrs. Solomon Loeb counseled her children and grandchildren, “When traveling on a train for short distances, never hurry for the exit when it reaches your stop. People will think you are a pushy Jew.” Adolph Ladenburg cautioned his chauffeur—and it was intended as a rule of life for everyone in the family—“Never try to get through the traffic. Wait your proper turn before going. The stricter it’s run, the better for everybody’s good.” And he repeated it for emphasis, “*Everybody’s good.*” In blaming the Russians for the anti-Semitism that existed in New York, the Germans themselves began to display anti-Semitic attitudes.

German Jewish anti-Semitism had begun to take form when Rabbi Kaufmann Kohler of Temple Emanu-El, touting German superiority, stated that German roots meant “peace, liberty, progress, and civilization,” and that German Jews were freed of “the shackles of medievalism,” with their minds “impregnated with German sentiment ... no longer Oriental.” By a queer rationale, the Germans began to speak of the Russians as something akin to the Yellow Peril and Russian “Orientalism” became a repeated theme. The German Jewish press echoed this, speaking of the “un-American ways” of the “wild Asiatics,” and referring to Russian Jews as “a piece of Oriental antiquity in the midst of an ever-Progressive Occidental Civilization.” The *American Hebrew* asked: “Are we waiting for the natural process of assimilation between Orientalism and Americanism? This will perhaps never take place.” The *Hebrew Standard* stated it even more strongly: “The thoroughly acclimated American Jew ... has no religious, social or intellectual sympathies with them. He is closer to the Christian sentiment around him than to the Judaism of these miserable darkened Hebrews.” Yes, the Russians *did* seem to have a different color skin. Because many Russian names ended in “ki,” they were called “kikes”—a German Jewish contribution to the American vernacular. (Germans are also said to have invented the term “Bohunk,” referring to Jews from Bohemia.)

Looking around them, the immigrant Russians saw German Jewish millionaires and quickly learned that these men had started as peddlers. If that was the avenue to success, they would take it. The future for peddlers in the 1880’s and ’90’s wasn’t what it had been in the ’40’s and ’50’s, but Russian Jews would have to learn this the hard way. The Russian Jewish peddlers, with packs or behind pushcarts, took to the streets of Manhattan.

In their dark baggy suits, hats, shoestring ties, and sausage curls, they chanted what became a familiar street refrain: “Suspendahs, collahbuttons, ’lastic, matches, hankeches—please, lady, buy!”

There was also the touchy matter of the Yiddish language which the Russians spoke. Yiddish newspapers had sprung up which the Germans denounced as “socialistic”—or worse. They called the Yiddish theater “barbarous.” Yiddish itself they called a “piggish jargon,” and insisted that it was “a language only understood by Polish and Russian Jews.” But the truth was that Yiddish, which is Judeo-German, was perfectly intelligible to Germans who were *not* Jewish. Yet Yiddish, like the foot peddler’s pack, was another symbol of a buried past. Yiddish stood for poverty, meanness, the ugliness of the *Judengasse*—for everything the German wanted to escape.

At the moment when language seemed at the heart of all the bitterness, two young German Jewish girls took a somewhat different stand. They were Alice and Irene Lewisohn, daughters of Leonard Lewisohn, who made a pact that they would never marry, but devote their lives instead to the welfare of immigrant Jews, and to the girls’ greatest love, the theater.* The girls began giving funds to build the Neighborhood Playhouse as a headquarters for the performing arts in the heart of the Lower East Side ghetto. Their plan was to produce plays in both English and Yiddish, and yet, when their first play, *Jephthah’s Daughter*, was offered in English, the Yiddish press accused the girls of catering to uptown groups and not supporting Yiddish theater, which the immigrants needed and missed so badly. While the girls continued to present most plays in English, subsequently several Yiddish-language plays were performed at the Neighborhood Playhouse. Uptown, of course, the sisters were treated as scandalous rebels, especially when it was learned that the *Folksbühne* group was performing at their Playhouse. (The *Folksbühne* was sponsored by the “Socialist” Workmen’s Circle.) The Neighborhood Playhouse also gave the noted actor-director, Ben Ami, his first chance to present himself in the United States, even though he spoke no English.

To most well-to-do Germans, one of the most terrifying things about the Russians was their interest in forming trade unions. This threatened the Germans’ pocketbook, always the most vulnerable part of the anatomy of any rich man. And so, to the uptown German, the Lower East Side Russian

became the Enemy. The division between the two camps widened. It was worker versus boss, mass versus class, vulgar versus genteel, “foreigner” versus “American,” Russian versus German, Jew versus Jew.

Still, though there was literally nothing about the Russians of which the Germans approved, the Russians could not be ignored. There were simply too many of them. Clearly, the Germans would have preferred it if the Russians had never come, but there they were. For a while, the United Hebrew Charities and the Baron de Hirsch Fund—a £493,000 trust established by the German capitalist for the specific purpose of helping Jewish immigrants settle in America—embarked on programs to inspire Eastern Europeans to settle elsewhere than New York. These organizations, trying to sound charitable, pointed out that the “country air” in New Jersey or the Catskills would surely benefit the immigrants. They met with little success. In 1888 two hundred Jews were shipped back to Europe in cattle boats. But what were two hundred out of hundreds of thousands? Uptowners, increasingly alarmed, attempted to have laws passed in Washington to restrain further immigration. But the tide could not be stopped.

The next logical step, as far as the Germans were concerned, was to try, if possible, to reshape these shabby immigrants along what the Germans considered “acceptable” German lines—to clean the immigrants up, dust them off, and get them to behave and look as much like Americans as possible. The East Side settlement houses, originally little more than delousing stations, were set up. The United Hebrew Charities began providing free lodging, meals, and medical care for immigrants, and sponsored entertainments and lectures—on manners, morals, marriage, and the dangers of socialism—designed to show the poor Russians the unwisdom of their former ways. When refugees overflowed Castle Garden and the rooming houses nearby, the New York Commissioner of Emigration opened the Ward’s Island buildings, and Jacob Schiff contributed \$10,000 for an auxiliary barracks.

Others contributed in their own way. A particularly busy lady of the period was Mrs. Minnie Louis, a voluble woman whose ample body was overstuffed with good intentions. Minnie was not exactly a member of the German “crowd” of the highest social standing, but she represented its point of view. And if, since the Sephardim had Emma Lazarus, the Germans

wanted a poet of their very own, Minnie filled the role. In a poem, addressed to the immigrant Russians, she explained “What It Is to Be a Jew.” She started by declaring what a Jew wasn’t:

To wear the yellow badge, the locks,
The caftan-long, the low-bent head,
To pocket unprovoked knocks
And shamle on in servile dread—
'Tis not this to be a Jew.

But, she added:

Among the ranks of men to stand
Full noble with the noblest there;
To aid the right in every land
With mind, with might, with heart, with prayer—
This is the eternal Jew!

Be a man, in other words, like Jacob Schiff or Solomon Loeb or the Lehmans, Warburgs, Seligmans, and Lewisohns. It was a large order. Jacob Schiff admired the poem. The Russians admired it less.

Minnie Louis, in her stone marten cape, became a familiar figure on the Lower East Side, where she passed out cookies and exhorted immigrants to stop speaking Yiddish and cut off their curls. But to the Russians Minnie became an object of suspicion. On the Lower East Side it was widely rumored that she was not a Jew at all but a Christian missionary.

It would take more than poetry and cookies to elevate the immigrant to what the Germans considered his proper station. And so, led by men like Jacob Schiff, the massive programs of philanthropy began. As the *American Hebrew* sorrowfully observed, “All of us should be sensible of what we owe not only to these ... coreligionists, but to ourselves, who will be looked upon by our gentile neighbors as the natural sponsors for these, our brethren.” The Germans took up this task with a heavy collective sigh, as if assuming the white man’s burden. This was the atmosphere of philanthropy—money was given largely but grudgingly, not out of the great religious principle of *Zedakah*, or charity on its highest plane, given out of pure loving kindness, but out of a hard, bitter sense of resentment,

embarrassment, and worry over what the neighbors would think. Many wealthy gentile families were enlisted to aid the Germans in their heavy chore of uplifting the Russians. In the 1890's Mrs. Russell Sage, Warner Van Norden, and Henry Phipps all contributed importantly to the United Hebrew Charities, and Mrs. Josephine Shaw Lowell established her East Side Relief Work Committee to "put our poor 'Hebrew Jews' at work and to clothe the poor Negroes of the Sea Islands."*

As the wheels of philanthropy began to turn, pulling its heavy load of impoverished humanity behind it, any spirit of benevolence that might have existed at the outset grew less. Philanthropy became something very close to patronage, with the Germans, the patron lords, doling out funds to the poor, the miserable, the dependent and the patronized, the new "huddled masses." From a tithing system of raising money, something painfully like taxation developed, and wealthy Germans, having been brusquely informed of how much they were expected to contribute, emerged from meetings of the United Hebrew Charities with red and angry faces.

Not surprisingly, the Russians, on the receiving end of this charity, had no trouble sensing the spirit in which it was given. Uptown social workers and investigating teams invaded the Lower East Side, poking through blocks of railroad flats, clucking about filth and garbage, and asking impertinent personal questions—often to people who, in their own circle, were considered men of consequence. The Germans, however, were frequently surprised that the Russians, having accepted their largess, did not always respond with gratitude. As the *Yiddische Gazette* reported in 1894:

In the philanthropic institutions of our aristocratic German Jews you see beautiful offices, desks, all decorated, but strict and angry faces. Every poor man is questioned like a criminal, is looked down upon; every unfortunate suffers self-degradation and shivers like a leaf, just as if he were standing before a Russian official. When the same Russian Jew is in an institution of Russian Jews, no matter how poor and small the building, it will seem to him big and comfortable. He feels at home among his own brethren who speak his tongue, understand his thoughts and feel his heart.

Alas, it is possible that this reporter is speaking of just such German philanthropists as Jacob Schiff. Schiff, for all his giving, lacked the

common touch. His buttoned, German sense of superiority was too great. When faced with a Russian, his blue eyes glazed. When the son of a German friend of Schiff's announced that he had fallen in love with, and wished to marry, a Russian girl, his father cried, "You must have got her pregnant!"

It was not surprising that, as Russian Jewish families grew prosperous, they established charities to care for their own. Needy Russians began turning their backs on German philanthropy in favor of Russian. Though the United Hebrew Charities opposed it, East Side doctors organized the Jewish Maternity Hospital in 1906, where Jewish mothers could be certain they were being served kosher food (which the Germans also frowned on), and where the relationship between doctor and patient was not one of benefactor to beggar, but of equality. Uptown, at Mount Sinai Hospital, though 90 percent of the patients were Eastern Europeans, there was a rule that no Eastern Europeans could be admitted to the staff.

Some Russian and Polish Jewish families did, as they began to make money, attempt to copy the German model and assumed German airs. They became the "Kalvarier Deutsch," and boasted, "*Mayn weib iz gevoren ah deitschke un ich bin gevoren ah deitsch.*" ("My wife has become a lady and I have become a gentleman.") But, for their attempts to bask in the glow of German respectability, they were also looked down upon. Many Russians Germanized their names; Selig became Sigmund, and so on. Others took German surnames, but this was often because, if one had a Russian name, it was impossible to obtain credit at an uptown German bank.* And no matter how successful a Russian became, or how hard he tried to Germanify himself, he found the sacred circle of uptown German Jewish society closed to him. Though the Germans gave away millions to the Russian immigrants, they never extended them invitations to their dinner parties, clubs, and dances.

When, on rare occasions, Russians found themselves inside a German's Fifth Avenue mansion, they reacted with awe. Felix Warburg, who was even more philanthropic than his father-in-law, Mr. Schiff, had a private little joke which used to amuse his family whenever a recipient of his charity came around. As a boy in Berlin, when the Kaiser's car sped by it played a little four-note melody on its horn. The joke in Germany used to be that the words to this tune were "*Mit unserem Gelt*"—"With our money."

Sometimes a Warburg pensioner would come to the Warburg house with a little gift for Felix. Accepting it, Felix would hum the little tune under his breath. It made his children giggle.

Once Felix invited two Russians to a Jewish charities meeting at his house. He had never met them before, but he knew how to spot them. They were the two who didn't come in dinner jackets. He overheard this pair standing in front of one of his Italian paintings and saying, "When Communism comes and there's a division of property, I hope I draw this house." Felix stepped over to the improperly attired men and said, suavely, "When Communism does come, and there is a redistribution of goods, I hope that if you do get my house, you will also invite me to be your guest, because I have always enjoyed it," and walked away.

But Adolph Lewisohn, who was always something of an individualist and who often did offbeat, rather surprising things, once decided that he would invite some Russian Jewish families to his Fifth Avenue house to dine. They came, and, to his astonishment and delight, he and the Russians hit it off very well. The crowd was shocked, and asked, "How can Adolph *do* that?" But Adolph defended his action, and insisted that his Russian friends were not boorish and uncouth at all but that, on the contrary, they were "witty and interesting personalities" and had conversed intelligently about music, literature, and art. "They had read more Shakespeare than I had," he said.

But, despite such gestures, the stern wall between German and Russian persisted. In the early 1900's a group of East Side Jews began to envision a United Hebrew Community, "to effect a union of Jewish societies and congregations in New York City." But it would take events of violence of a world-wide and unimagined sort to bring this about even partially.

* Alice later broke the pact, and married Herbert Crowley.

* In this period, the Germans were forced to face another irritating fact: They were being increasingly equated with Negroes.

*As a result, in Jewish circles in New York today one can always speculate whether so-and-so, with his German name, is really a German or a secret Pole or Russian.

THE EQUITABLE LIFE AFFAIR

One of the most colorful and written-about young men in turn-of-the-century New York was James Hazen Hyde. He had been nicknamed “the hayseed” by his Harvard classmates, but now, five years out of college, he was considered a hayseed no longer.

Upon the death of his father, H. B. Hyde, the young man had found himself, at the age of twenty-three, the custodian of a billion dollars’ worth of life insurance, and was in charge of the savings of 600,000 individuals who held policies in the senior Hyde’s Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, “Protector of the Widow and Orphan,” the largest insurance company in the country. The Equitable had over \$400 million in its treasury. Young Hyde, whose father had built the company from scratch, owned 51 percent of it.

The minute the Equitable passed into James Hazen Hyde’s hands, he became, in view of the vast ramifications of the Equitable, a director of forty-six other corporations, including the Metropolitan Opera, but whether he had the intellectual equipment to cope with these directorships was doubtful. He was far more interested in enjoying himself. He had a barber imported from Paris to cut his hair and trim his beard in the French style, and, in the restaurants where he liked to stop, he positioned various French chefs, who had nothing to do but await the moments when their employer might drop in and wish some specialty. Hyde loved costume balls, indeed parties of all varieties. He threw a *bal masqué* at Sherry’s that cost him \$200,000. He had a country château on Long Island, with a private “office” in the stables where he entertained “actresses” and other friends; and where “French costume dramas and other entertainments were performed.” A reporter from the Paris *Figaro* described Hyde’s country office as

a room full of telephones and electric bells, furnished with fine carpets, old mahogany furniture, sporting photographs and prints, coaching trophies and hunting horns; next to his office is the kitchen, which permits him and his guests to come when the whim seizes them and have supper in the stables more freely and gaily than in the château; I remember a very festive supper that we had there with the thermometer outside fifteen above zero, where ladies donned old postilion hats or bull-fighter bonnets and blew hunting horns while everybody danced the cake walk.

Life in the city was every bit as vivid as it was in the country, and another reporter describes the dashing young exquisite on his way to his office at the Equitable, “driving jauntily downtown in his private hansom cab, a bunch of violets nodding at the side of the horse’s head, another bunch nodding from the coachman’s hat, and a third bunch breathing incense from the buttonhole of the young man himself.” For all this—and probably *because* of all this—the financial community suspected that Hyde hadn’t the slightest idea how to run an insurance company. They were quite right. Among the many financiers who wooed him after his father’s death, offering to help him run his company and see to it that he “did the right things” with it, the first to gain Hyde’s confidence was Ned Harriman. With Harriman, also eager to help, came Jacob Schiff and Kuhn, Loeb & Company. Schiff was placed on the board of the Equitable in 1900.

There were, however, others deeply involved in the affairs of the Equitable. They were the Alexanders, a family of such age and distinction that they snubbed Mrs. Astor, whom they considered “an amusing little upstart.” So grand were the Alexanders that they preferred not to identify themselves with New York at all, and referred to themselves as “an old Princeton family.” The Alexanders were not only large Equitable stockholders. James W. Alexander, head of the clan, had been made trustee, by the elder Hyde, of the younger Hyde’s estate until he reached the age of thirty and, it was hoped, discretion. It was Mr. Alexander’s opinion that James Hazen Hyde’s affairs were in serious need of management—an opinion which, needless to say, young Hyde did not share. Ned Harriman announced that he was stoutly on Hyde’s side, and he said that he “did not

think that the Alexanders' method of management of the Equitable was the right one."

J. P. Morgan, meanwhile, had a large interest in another insurance company, the New York Life, and was following events at the Equitable closely. What Morgan had in mind was to buy up the Equitable and add it to the New York Life; he and his client, Jim Hill, thought that the Equitable's half-billion-dollar treasury could be put to excellent use financing railroad ventures, and this, of course, is exactly what Harriman and Schiff had in mind for *their* railroads. Soon after Schiff's appointment to the Equitable's board, the insurance company began investing in railroad issues recommended, not surprisingly, by Kuhn, Loeb.

And so the alignment for control of the Equitable—and Hyde—was the same as in the Northern Pacific battle, Morgan and Hill against Harriman and Schiff. The Equitable's fifty-two directors began taking sides.

Alarmed with the deteriorating situation, James Alexander, along with other officers in the company, drew up a protest in which they demanded that Hyde give up control of the Equitable and that the company be "mutualized"—that is, that the right to elect directors be taken from Hyde and given to the policyholders themselves. (But Alexander had great influence with Equitable policyholders and so really wanted nothing more than to be able to vote the Equitable's shares himself.)

With both the Harriman and the Morgan groups pressing Hyde to sell his Equitable interest to them, Hyde may have felt himself surrounded. Perhaps he simply didn't care. In any case, for reasons that have never been quite clear, he suddenly sold all his stock in the Equitable to a lone-wolf speculator named Thomas Fortune Ryan. Moreover, the price Ryan paid for controlling interest in the insurance empire was startlingly small—\$2,500,000. And when it was announced that dividend income on this amount of stock was only \$3,514 a year, things seemed decidedly fishy. "Why?" cried the New York *World* editorially. "What is the real motive?" For the moment, as the Schiff and Morgan groups silently withdrew, no one was quite willing to say.

In the storm of threats, imprecations, charges and accusations that followed, James Hazen Hyde departed for Paris. He never returned. In 1929 he appeared briefly in the news again when it was revealed that Durand's

restaurant in Paris offered, as a dessert, a peach flambéed in kirsch called “Poached Peach à la James Hazen Hyde.”

By leaving when he did, Hyde conveniently avoided getting involved in what followed, which was a full-scale investigation by the Armstrong Committee of the New York State Legislature into the securities dealings of the big insurance companies, particularly the New York Life with Morgan on its board, and the Equitable with Jacob Schiff. Schiff, Morgan, Harriman, and Hill were all called before the committee and its investigative counsel, Charles Evans Hughes. Hughes turned up a number of interesting things. Morgan’s New York Life, in order to hide the fact that it owned stocks—and so it could say in its annual report, “The Company does not invest in stocks of any kind”—had made a number of fictitious loans to its employees. A bond clerk, for instance, was on the books as having received a loan in the sum of \$1,857,000, and a fifteen-year-old Negro messenger boy had, according to the company’s accounts, been granted a generous loan of \$1,150,000.

Hughes was particularly interested in Jacob Schiff’s stock sales to the Equitable. The New York State insurance law provided that any director of an insurance company who profited by “selling or aiding in the sale of any stocks or securities to or by such corporation shall forfeit his position ... and be disqualified from thereafter holding any such office in any insurance corporation.” Had, Hughes asked, the firm of which Mr. Schiff was a partner, Kuhn, Loeb, sold any securities to the company of which he was a director, the Equitable? Yes, Schiff admitted, he had, but the stocks had been sound and the prices had been fair.* Many of them were for his favorite railroads. He added that, after all, his firm had sold “only” \$49,704,408 worth of stock to the Equitable, and this paltry amount of business had been done over five years’ time. He also pointed out that the \$49,704,408 worth which Kuhn, Loeb had sold was “only” 16 percent of the total bought by the insurance company over the same five-year span, and finally—the most extraordinary percentage figure of all—that \$49,704,408 worth of sales was “less than 3 percent” of Kuhn, Loeb’s business. Schiff had never before revealed a figure that indicated Kuhn, Loeb’s size. Now he had. In the five years from 1900 to 1905, the firm had sold \$1.75 billion worth of securities. That meant \$350 million a year. In those golden pre-income tax days, such Kuhn, Loeb partners as Schiff,

Felix Warburg and Otto Kahn must have brought home very nice pay checks indeed.

The modest presentation of these heady figures must have satisfied the Hughes committee. At the close of the investigation it was reported that Jacob Schiff “was one of the few men prominently identified with the Equitable who came through unscathed in reputation.” Nevertheless, the investigation led to far stiffer insurance regulations. And it offered, in passing, at least one explanation why the Equitable stock which Ryan had bought from Hyde for \$2.5 million yielded such a niggardly dividend income as \$3,514 a year. The company’s charter, it seemed, stipulated that all profits except 7 percent of the \$100,000 par value of stock should go to policyholders. The stock itself, however, could be used as a massive borrowing tool, to secure loans far in excess of its par valuation. As the investigating committee noted, “The stock must be regarded as affording enormous collateral advantages to those interested in financial operations.” Thomas Fortune Ryan clearly felt that way about it. He went on to buy a huge house on Fifth Avenue, added a private chapel, and converted the house next door into an art gallery which he filled with tapestries, Limoges enamels, and busts, mostly of himself—three of them by Rodin.

Jacob Schiff, meanwhile, as soon as the investigation was over, quietly resigned from the Equitable board.

* In similar cases it had been decided that, though such sales were a “technical offense,” they were not “ethically offensive” if the conditions of soundness and fairness of price were met.

“I ENCLOSE MY CHECK FOR \$2,000,000 ...”

Glamour, on a magnificent, even international scale, was introduced to the New York crowd in the person of Otto Kahn. Like his friend and partner, Felix Warburg, Kahn was a blade—and more so. He was so sartorially splendid that, when appearing before the New York Board of Estimate to submit a fiscal plan for the city, the New York *World* devoted half a column to his remarks and three-quarters of a column to a description of his clothes—the pearl-gray cutaway, the cashmere trousers, the stickpin of an egg-size black pearl, even the tiny orchid in his buttonhole.

Through Otto Kahn the city’s Jewish and gentile elite would embark on a new relationship, and, for this, Kahn had arrived at exactly the right moment. When Mrs. Astor had died in 1908, it was said that “With her passed not only a social dynasty but also the whole idea of hereditary or otherwise arbitrary social supremacy in America; with her, indeed, passed ‘Society’ in the old sense.” For over thirty years, attendance at her ball had been the one and only test of social importance in New York. “If she invited you, you were in; if she did not, you were out,” explained a contemporary. With the aid of Ward McAllister, she had defined society’s limits, and at the height of her social powers, her box—No. 7—at the Metropolitan Opera House was “a social throne. It was always Mrs. Astor who gave the signal as to the proper time to leave. The time bore no relation to the stage to which the opera had advanced, but was selected because it happened to suit the matron; the time she chose was usually just after an intermission.”*

American society had for a long time taken a rather proprietary interest in opera. The reason why was fairly simple. In the early days of American

cities, when the rich entertained one another, they often found themselves all dressed up with no place to go. After an elaborate dinner party in New York, there was nothing to do but go home and go to bed. As Henry James wrote, “There was nothing, as in London or Paris, to go ‘on’ to; the going ‘on’ is, for the New York aspiration, always the stumbling-block. A great court-function would alone have met the strain ... would alone properly have crowned the hour.” In the absence of court functions, opera and the opera season filled this dreary gap. Later, James called opera “the only approach to the implication of the tiara known to American law” and “the great vessel of social salvation.”

Opera was more fashionable than the theater for several reasons. The theater has always provided a more personal, speculative experience. One never knows what one will encounter at the new play. But the very formality and artificiality of grand opera makes it reliable; in turn-of-the-century New York, one could go to the opera certain that one would hear nothing untoward, “vulgar,” or particularly surprising. In much of Europe opera had belonged to the common man, but by the early 1900’s the situation abroad had begun to change also. The upper classes seized and took over opera. In Berlin the opera season had taken on the appearance of a “court function,” and in England it was said of Edward VII that “he only talked freely when he went to the opera.”

In America each city had its own set of rules involving the opera. In San Francisco, which had built its opera house and established its “season” while it was no more than a miner’s town with unpaved streets, the fashionable night was Thursday, where one showed that one was able to entertain in style regardless of the convention of “maid’s night off.” In New York the smart night for opera-going was Monday, for the simple reason that Mrs. Astor and McAllister had chosen Monday as their night to go. Mrs. Astor, who established the chic practice of leaving early, also—à la August Belmont—made it fashionable to arrive late. The great horseshoe of gilded boxes surrounding Mrs. Astor’s throne contained others of her “Four Hundred.” Outside the narrow, locked, and curtained door of each box, the boxholder’s name engraved on an oblong brass plate was a kind of proclamation that that person had reached the pinnacle of social success. Aspiring climbers fought in vain for opera boxes of their own, which sold for as much as \$30,000 apiece, in the Diamond Horseshoe, and even

younger members of old, box-holding families had to wait many years for gilt-and-velvet shrines of their own. The opera boxes had further rules. It was considered “vulgar,” for instance, to visit other boxes until the second intermission. A pair of Lemaire opera glasses, encrusted with diamonds and sapphires and costing \$75,000, was, on the other hand, not vulgar. It went without saying that no Jew could be a Metropolitan Opera box holder.

The opera ritual had become so stiff and studied by the early 1900’s that the quality of the music performed and sung was of extremely small importance. Appearing at the opera had become of far greater concern than hearing it. One spent such a short time at the opera anyway—sort of a digestive interval between dinner and an Assembly ball—that one hardly bothered to listen. Nor, considering the rigid sameness of the programming—it was nearly all Italian—did one really *need* to listen. Harriet Beecher Stowe, attending the opera, was surprised to hear, during a soft passage in the music, a woman’s voice saying, “I always cook mine in vinegar.” So dilatory was society’s interest in the actual music that the Metropolitan’s impresario had said candidly, “I have never discovered a voice in my life. I don’t go around discovering operas. I am not musician enough for that. Opera is nothing but cold business to me.”

It was, of all things, the Equitable Life affair that first got Otto Kahn involved with the Metropolitan. When James Hazen Hyde went on the Met’s board, and when Jacob Schiff became Hyde’s banker, it was natural that Schiff should have been more concerned with Hyde’s insurance assets than with his opera-house connections. Hyde, however—despite the anti-Semitic cast of the Met—did invite Schiff to sit with him on the Met’s board. Schiff declined, suggesting that Hyde consider his young partner, Mr. Kahn.

Kahn, at first, was doubtful whether to accept Hyde’s offer. As a banker, he was eager to keep a hand in whatever went on downtown. But he also loved music and the theater, played three instruments, and the romance of the opera appealed to him. He was also worried that an opera directorship might damage his position as a businessman. As Kahn said,

At that time I was on the threshold of my business career. There were more people then than now looking askance at art.* They looked upon the joy of life and art as incongruous elements in the general

harmony of the sphere of existence. I was warned by well-meaning friends that I had better not fool with operatic and theatrical matters; that I would lose standing among serious-minded people if I did so; that it was *infra dig* for a staid and reputable banker to have his name connected with an opera company; that my motives would be misunderstood and misinterpreted.

Faced with these temptations and warnings and misgivings, Otto Kahn consulted Ned Harriman, who gave him some astonishing advice.

“You just go ahead and do your art job, but don’t *dabble* at it,” Harriman told him. “Make it one of your serious occupations. As long as you do not let it interfere with your other work, with your business duties and ambitions and thoughts, it will do you no harm. On the contrary, it will exercise your imagination and diversify your activities. It ought to make a better businessman out of you.”

Kahn became a member of the board of the Metropolitan Opera, and immediately began following Harriman’s advice. In those days the structure of an opera company was quite different from what it is today. The Metropolitan Opera and Realty Company was a shareholding corporation which owned the opera house building; the corporation leased the building to an impresario whose responsibility it was to hire the company and put on opera. Otto Kahn initially purchased two hundred shares of stock in the corporation. Hyde had had three hundred shares of Metropolitan Opera stock, and when he departed for Paris, Otto Kahn had bought these. Henry Morgenthau, another director, soon retired, and Kahn bought his three hundred shares. Suddenly Kahn was the opera’s leading stockholder. He began buying up opera stock wherever it was available, and presently he had 2,750 shares and virtually owned the Metropolitan Opera. As his mentor, Jacob Schiff, would have agreed, owning the company was the first prerequisite to making it one of his “serious occupations.”

One of his first moves in 1903 was to hire a new impresario from Germany, Heinrich Conried, who, according to critics who instantly materialized, possessed no qualifications whatever. At the time, a writer for the New York *Herald* commented: “The only explanation of Kahn’s motive in the Conried selection was that the latter’s very ignorance of music might have given his sponsor a chance to superintend, direct, and manage.” The

same writer warned Mr. Kahn that Conried was “out for big game himself,” and was “out to be the head of the opera not only in name but in fact also,” and that Otto Kahn had used “Wall Street tactics” to get Conried appointed—rushing the new director in by getting busy board members to sign over their proxies to Kahn. (Kahn, who had already begun his lifetime practice of demanding that newspapers print retractions of stories he considered inexact, made no comment on this one, so we may assume it contains the truth.) No one noted that a great revolution in the Metropolitan Opera was under way, and Conried’s first opening night, which marked the American debut of a young Italian tenor named Enrico Caruso in *Rigoletto*, was received with the same bored languor as usual by the Diamond Horseshoe, and got mixed notices in the press.

It was not until December of Conried’s first season that the New York newspapers and the opera-going public realized that an important change had taken place at the stately Met. This was Conried’s brilliant staging of the first American performance of Wagner’s *Parsifal*, which the critics swooningly called “without doubt the most perfect production ever made on the American lyric stage.” This was followed by another American premiere—Donizetti’s *L’Elisir d’Amore*, which revealed that Caruso had an unsuspected flair for comedy—and suddenly it was noticed that there never had been as many as two new operas introduced in a season. When it turned out that both the operas and the chief performers had been selected by Otto Kahn of Kuhn, Loeb & Company, the Diamond Horseshoe didn’t know what to think. Neither, for that matter, did Wall Street.

Heinrich Conried would probably have stayed at the Met for many years if it had not been for three unrelated circumstances. There was, for one thing, the apparent great success of Oscar Hammerstein’s Manhattan Opera, five blocks away. There was also the unfortunate publicity that attached itself to the Met when a New York woman accused Enrico Caruso of molesting her in Central Park. Finally there was Conried’s health, which began to fail in 1907, the year that Kahn was elected chairman of the board of the Metropolitan Opera. Quietly Kahn set about to find a successor, and he soon became convinced that the man should be Giulio Gatti-Casazza, who, for the past ten years, had been general manager of La Scala in Milan.

When Kahn’s first letter to Gatti-Casazza arrived in Milan, the impresario showed it to La Scala’s conductor, Arturo Toscanini. Toscanini said he

thought Gatti ought to accept and, furthermore, said that he would like to go with him to New York. A meeting between Kahn and Gatti was scheduled in Paris, and, after details of salary and contract had been worked out, Gatti-Casazza delivered the following florid acceptance speech (at least this was how he remembered it in his autobiography):

“Thank you, Mr. Kahn, for the faith you have shown in me. I am well aware that you are besieged and importuned by a large number of persons who aspire to Conried’s place. I certainly will not importune you in any way, the more so since at the Scala in Milan I am very well situated in every respect. Nevertheless, if you and your colleagues believe that I am the person suited for the Metropolitan, please let me know, and in that event I hope that we shall be able to come to an agreement, I should wish that in that case an offer should also be made to Maestro Toscanini.”

It was of course a great coup for Kahn, who had managed to capture not one but two of Europe’s greatest musical figures for the Met. His opera house, he had begun to say, would one day wear “the blue ribbon of the opera world.” In announcing that he had hired Gatti-Casazza and Toscanini, Kahn, lest anyone think that the emphasis of the company would be “too Italian,” was careful to say that French, German, and Italian operas would be performed with equal frequency.

There were to be other innovations. Kahn announced that, for the first time in the Met’s history, the entire management staff would be on salary, and that Gatti-Casazza would not have to concern himself with box-office receipts as previous impresarios had done. Any losses would be absorbed by “the board of the Metropolitan Opera Company,” which pretty much meant Otto Kahn. The newspapers applauded the news as “a change from the old order to the new.... Power has passed from the older generation to the younger.” Art and culture, it was said, were at last coming to America, delivered by the Metropolitan Opera and Otto Kahn.

All at once, he was very much a figure about town. His comings and goings—to the theater, to the opera, to restaurants, to clubs—were chronicled in the papers. One saw him on Fifth Avenue on Sunday mornings, strolling with his dachshunds in his tall silk hat and silver-handled cane. One marveled at the polished tips of his shoes below his

spats, the perfection of his mohair gloves, the inevitable large pearl stickpin in his tie, placed just above the V in his velvet-collared Chesterfield. Few men of the day possessed quite such dash. He reminded many people of Goethe's description of Kahn's home town, Mannheim: "Friendly, serene, and symmetrical." There was, about his build, a certain elegant frailness. Still, he always stood and walked with ramrod straightness, a relic of his service with the Mainz Hussars, and there was nothing indefinite about his large, blue, appraising eyes under their heavy dark brows, nor anything accidental about his handlebar mustache, so perfectly shaped and brushed that it might have been a clever bit of *trompe l'oeil* painting. He was, in fact, a fashion plate of almost Renaissance proportions.

He also possessed a commodity that had been something of a rarity in New York's German Jewish crowd. He could smile. He smiled often and easily and well, and his smile served him particularly well in an era, and in a city, that was growing used to chilly and ill-mannered millionaires. He could also speak. Unlike Jacob Schiff, whose accent often made him difficult to understand, Kahn was admired for his "beautiful English accent," which was actually a style of speech called "Continental English"—clipped, flattened, undiphthonged. He was one of the first in the crowd to be often in demand as a public speaker. He was at home on the dais. He adored the spotlight.

Also, though he pretended to have a patrician disdain for personal publicity, he loved it, and his own public and press relations were nearly always perfect. Like Harriman and Jacob Schiff, he believed in personally inspecting railroads in which Kuhn, Loeb had an interest. Once, traveling to Denver to look over a new line, he had descended the steps of his private car to be interviewed by reporters who observed, with wonder, that the great Otto Kahn was "the most simply dressed man there." (He had had the good sense to omit tall silks, spats, and stickpins in the provinces.) At another time, speaking to a general audience, he had said that there should not be less government control of big business, but more—endearing himself to workingmen. At the Met he adopted the habit of strolling into the press room on opening nights and gathering the reviewers around him. Then he would lead them out into the street—to a nearby saloon for a drink or two, or to enjoy a few vaudeville acts at a nearby theater or, in the days of Minsky, to watch burlesque. He would then guide them back to the opera

house, considerably cheered up, for the final aria. His mock-formal invitations—“Would any of you gentlemen perhaps care to accompany me for a few moments?”—became so familiar that the minute Kahn entered the press room the reviewers reached for their coats. Needless to say, Met performances were nearly always favorably reviewed.

He had begun collecting clippings about himself around 1901. From then on he was engaged in a long love affair with the press. He scanned the newspapers morning and night for mention of his name, and “The sight of his picture in the paper gave him more pleasure than the news that he had made several thousand dollars in a stock transaction,” according to one biographer.* Eventually he employed the famous public-relations firm of Ivy Lee to see to it that the press was properly informed of his activities, and he kept all his press cuttings bound in expensive cloth-and-leather volumes of over a hundred pages each. In the end there were a dozen of these. Stamped in gold letters on the spine of each fat volume were the words “FROM THE PRESS,” and on the title page were the tiny, extremely modest initials, “O.H.K.”

These were the initials that signed his memoranda which set so many things in motion at the Metropolitan Opera Company, and one member of his staff commented that they really stood for “Opera House Kahn.” His memos covered the most minute details of the Met and its operations—new lights for the vestibules, latches for the lobby doors, a wider door for the ladies’ room, memos about scenery, costumes, makeup, and lights. In his tiny, European script O.H.K. wanted to know, “Why have the chimes for the temple scene in *Parsifal* not been sent to Philadelphia?” To Gatti-Casazza, he wrote: “President and Mrs. Taft will be at *Aida* on the 15th inst. in Box 35. Please decorate it with a flag and have a nice bouquet, I suggest orchids and lilies of the valley, placed in the box for Mrs. Taft, with the compliments of the Board of Directors.” Next he was writing to an unknown opera goer who had complained about waiting in line for two hours only to find a soldout house. He enclosed two free tickets.

To his Kuhn, Loeb partners, it was all very startling. They were not disapproving but merely mystified. It was hard for them to imagine how he could do his work at the office and still do so much for the Metropolitan Opera. It was even harder when they realized that he *was* the Metropolitan. Actually, Kahn, who said that his family’s motto was “*Immer rastlos*

voran”—“Ever restlessly forward”—worked as many as eighteen hours a day at his double job, and often was required to combine the two.

There was, for instance, Kahn’s handling of the dispute between the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Delaware & Hudson, which is considered one of his greatest achievements. At the time, the main lines between New York and Chicago were four: the New York Central, the Pennsylvania, the B & O, and the Erie, in that order of importance. Mr. L. F. Loree of the Delaware & Hudson began to dream of building a “fifth system” to Chicago and, for that purpose, began secretly buying up large stock holdings in the Nickel Plate, the Wabash, the Western Maryland, and the Lehigh Valley, in hopes of consolidating these lines into a line competitive with the Pennsylvania.

When Kahn learned of Loree’s plan, he was horrified. It sounded painfully like the great Union Pacific-Northern Pacific fight of 1901, which had been his memorable introduction to railroading warfare. This, however, was considerably worse. At least rival banking houses had been involved in the Hill-Harriman affair. But both the Pennsylvania and Loree were Kuhn, Loeb clients. There had, in fact, been no situation quite like it in the history of railroading *or* banking.

Kahn’s strategy was to invite both Loree and Samuel Rea, president of the Pennsylvania, to meetings with him at the Kuhn, Loeb offices on a Saturday morning.* He placed Rea in one conference room and Loree in another. Kuhn, Loeb had held this sort of meeting before, with warring factions in adjoining rooms, but the problem had always been to keep the one unaware of the presence of the other. Kahn, however, decided to reverse this tactic. Separately, he told each man that his rival waited just beyond the door and that the door between them would not be opened until the terms of a peace had been agreed upon. Kahn’s device produced a curious psychological effect: each man became aware of the importance of the moment, and of how much hung upon its outcome. It was a device borrowed from the theater, but it worked. Both Rea and Loree, who had arrived each determined to destroy the other, were suddenly in a mood to compromise.

Meanwhile, adding to the suspense and to Kahn’s footwork was the fact that, in a third Kuhn, Loeb conference room, Signor Gatti-Casazza was waiting in one of his not-too-infrequent fits of temper. From the moment of

his arrival in New York Gatti had complained about the Met. The stage was too short and too narrow; the storehouses for scenery were too far from the theater, and sets had to be stacked outside on the sidewalk. There were no rehearsal rooms for ballet, chorus, or orchestra. The house contained too many “blind” seats in side sections of the orchestra. And so on. Kahn had agreed with him, and had promised, “In two or three years a new Metropolitan Opera House will be built for you.” That promise had been made many times since, and, sadly, Kahn’s dream of a new opera house was one he was never able to push to fulfillment.

In a fourth conference room was a young tenor who had written to Kahn for an audition. (It was the sort of thing Gatti-Casazza disapproved of his doing.)

And so, that Saturday morning, Kahn moved nimbly up and down corridors, back and forth between four separate meetings.

Presently, the temper of Gatti-Casazza had cooled, and he had departed with a kiss on both cheeks for Kahn. The young man had sung an aria, been given a check, and had gone. Undisturbed by the singing nearby, the two railroad presidents had agreed to come to terms, and Kahn opened the intervening door and brought them together. Rea offered to buy Loree’s railroad shares at a price so generous that Loree could hardly demur, and a major railroad war had been averted.

For all Gatti-Casazza’s splendid management, the Met was always running out of money, and Otto Kahn proved himself as adept at fund-raising as he was at handling the press. He was particularly good at the “matching gift” technique which, of course, had been used successfully by Schiff. He would match every sizable gift with an equal one of his own. As early as 1909, barely a year after Gatti-Casazza had joined the Met, Kahn was able to write to the Met’s board: “I am enclosing two checks of \$50,000 each from Mr. Vanderbilt and myself,” and a month later: “I am enclosing two checks from myself and Mr. Vanderbilt for \$25,000 each.” The following year he wrote: “I am enclosing my check for \$43,375....”

His gifts to the Metropolitan Opera began to amount to never less than \$100,000 a year. In 1932 Kahn was asked bluntly by a young composer how much, all told, he had given to the Met, and he replied with his usual pleasant suavity, “For your personal and confidential information, I may say

that my endeavors, in one way or another, to aid the cause of the Metropolitan Opera have cost me over two million dollars.”

Fellow board members, however, have put the figure somewhat higher, at \$2.5 million. And both they and Otto Kahn seem to forget two fairly important items: the million dollars-plus Kahn spent in his unsuccessful attempt to locate the company in a new opera house, and the \$1.2 million which he paid to Oscar Hammerstein for the Manhattan Opera House, to remove the Met’s competition.

In 1917 Otto Kahn was offered a box in the Diamond Horseshoe, an event which the New York *Herald* discreetly called “notable,” considering Kahn’s religion and which, by every sensible standard, was certainly long overdue. It was Box 14. Jacob Schiff, the *Herald* noted, for all his philanthropies, and though he had been an American citizen since 1870, had never been permitted to own a box, though he had been allowed to rent “Box 18 for certain performances.”

With his characteristic aplomb and expert sense of public relations, Kahn did not refuse the offer of the box. He accepted it graciously. But he continued to sit in the Director’s Box, where he had always sat. His new box, he explained, would be loaned to foreign dignitaries who visited the city.

It was probably the grandest gesture he could have made. It contained tolerance, wit, and just the right touch of derision. Somehow, this gesture made the banality of anti-Semitism all the more apparent, while at the same time it was clear that, as far as *some* Jews were concerned, some of the crusty social barriers that had been erected over the course of two generations were collapsing by going out of style.

**Our Times, Pre-War America*, by Mark Sullivan (Scribner).

*On Wall Street, certainly. One of the Street’s reasons for thinking young Hyde a featherweight was his “fancy, Frenchy” interest in opera.

* Mary Jane Matz, *The Many Lives of Otto Kahn* (Macmillan).

* Unlike his mentor, Jacob Schiff, Kahn nearly always worked on Saturdays.

THE “SINISTER TRANSMUTATION”

“Father, we must do this no longer,” Frieda Schiff Warburg whispered to Jacob Schiff. It was the summer of 1915, and the family was in Bar Harbor. As she and her father strolled down the shaded street of the town, chatting, Frieda had noticed people giving the two of them odd and hostile looks. She realized it was because they had been speaking, as they always did, in German. From that afternoon on, the Schiffs and Warburgs never spoke German again in public.

World War I had a deep and unsettling effect on the German Jewish crowd, and provided, perhaps, the most serious test of their emotional mettle since the founding fathers had arrived on American shores. Among the most deeply torn was Jacob Schiff. He was sixty-eight now, and beginning to show his age. He had developed a corklike dryness, a rigidity and crustiness, and an unwillingness to change his ways. He had grown accustomed to taking the waters annually at Marienbad, and the thought of a war between his adopted country and the land of his birth dismayed him. In the beginning he seemed to regard the war as something that had been devised against him personally, to inconvenience him and alter his routine.

He had had to endure a good deal during the past few years. For one thing, his hearing had begun to fail, and since he was too proud to admit to his incapacity, several sad and embarrassing things had happened. He had, at one point, invited President Theodore Roosevelt to speak at a banquet for one of his philanthropies, and Roosevelt spoke of his 1906 appointment of Oscar Straus to his Cabinet, saying, “When this country conferred upon me the honor of making me President of the United States, I of course at once called my good friend Oscar Straus to my side, and asked him to serve as Secretary of Commerce. It was not a question of religion, of politics, or of

catering to any specific group. It was simply a matter of the best man for the job.”

Schiff, who had been able to hear none of this, then rose to his feet and said, “President Roosevelt has been so kind in the past as to honor me with his confidences, and it was a great thrill to me that, when he became President, he told me he wanted to have a representative Jew in his Cabinet. He asked me who might be the best candidate to represent our people. I had no hesitancy in at once saying that Oscar Straus was the ideal man, and I believe, as a result, he named Mr. Straus immediately as his Secretary of Commerce.”

Poor Schiff, when he was told later what had happened, was furious, and denied that he had ever made such a statement, though of course there were hundreds of witnesses to the fact that he had.

And the first decade of the twentieth century had produced other problems. Panics were occurring with alarming frequency. In 1903 there was the so-called “rich man’s panic,” caused by manipulators in U.S. Steel stock, when Steel plunged from \$58 to \$8, taking most of the market with it. Then, four years later, the Panic of 1907 had threatened to wreck the whole fabric of Wall Street. These panics had naturally led to louder talk of the need for “banking reforms” and for a central reserve banking system.* In the noisy aftermath of the 1907 panic, it was all but forgotten that Jacob Schiff had for some time urged radical banking reform, and had called the American monetary system “a disgrace to a civilized community.” Instead, as usually happened, since he was a banker, he emerged identified as one of the villains of the panic.

The Panic of 1907 led, rather belatedly, to the Monetary Trust Investigation of 1912 by the Pujo Committee, named after its Senate Chairman. By now Wall Street was used to the pattern of panic, followed by an investigation, followed by tongue-clicking and head-shaking and muckraking in the press. But the Pujo Committee’s intent was, on the surface, deadly serious. It was to find out whether there was indeed a “money trust” controlling *all* industrial and financial affairs in the United States—a national financial conspiracy, in other words—just as trusts had been accused of trying to control whole areas of industry. The committee fixed its attention on seven men. The only man not connected with the so-called “White Protestant banking group” was Jacob Schiff.

Though the committee didn't find the monstrous trust it was looking for, it did find an almost unravelable interlocking of directorships and controls involving both industry and banking—polarized around two main money groups, headed by Morgan and Rockefeller—and so complicated in its scheme that it seemed unlikely that even its principal men understood it. It was as though American financial affairs had a life of their own, and had woven their own strange and marvelous cocoon. The committee disclosed that Kuhn, Loeb, despite its excellent relationships with Morgan, had primarily been allied with the Rockefeller-controlled National City Bank, of which Jacob Schiff had long been a director, and therefore that Schiff seemed to enjoy the best of both worlds.

All major banks were hauled in before the Pujo Committee and asked to produce records of their transactions since 1900. These were pre-income tax days, and one can of course wonder whether records produced were full ones. But, in any case, Kuhn, Loeb seemed to be doing nicely. In the five years since 1907 the firm by itself had marketed over \$500 million in securities, and in the ten years prior to 1907 over \$800 million in cooperation with other houses. Schiff admitted that there was “some collusion” in setting prices asked and bid for issues. “It was not good form to create unreasonable interference or competition,” he testified. “Good practices did not justify competition for security issues.” But there was, nonetheless, “a sort of rivalry” between firms—and Schiff mentioned instances when Speyer & Company had occasionally, sneakily, tried to make a deal with a Kuhn, Loeb client. As an argument against a Wall Street money conspiracy, that one seemed rather weak.

The Pujo Committee, in other words, certainly revealed that, though there might be no formal “money trust” agreement, there was a great deal of cooperation among the major powers in Wall Street. The Morgan-Baker-First National Bank group and the Rockefeller-Stillman-National City Bank group formed the inner circle. The powers were Steel and Oil, each with its massive bank. And, contrary to what everyone had supposed, there was no rivalry revealed between these “rival” factions. Kuhn, Loeb, the committee decided somewhat vaguely, was “qualifiedly allied, only, with the inner group.” While some people wondered what “qualifiedly allied, only” meant, others—particularly some members of the press—took it to mean

that Jacob Schiff had an inside track to both the leading powers of Wall Street. Well, even he admitted that he did.

As usually happened after Congressional investigations, when the publicity died down, everybody went back to what he had been doing all along. No one was punished, or even scolded, and there were no immediate reforms. But still—and Jacob Schiff understood this—the Pujo Committee investigation of 1913 marked the end of an era. America's bankers had been building a kind of fortress from which they had dominated not only the financial but also the industrial scene. The first crack had appeared in that structure.

Now, in 1914, Europe was at war. Worried, Jacob Schiff had begun to talk of a “negotiated peace” with Germany, and in letters to his friend President Eliot of Harvard he outlined his proposals. When these letters were published, they were widely misinterpreted. Instead of a negotiated peace, it was inferred that Schiff wanted a German victory, and it was widely rumored in Wall Street and elsewhere that Kuhn, Loeb & Company was pro-German. It was an era of tension and suspicion, when anything out of the ordinary was considered subversive. Though Schiff dutifully stopped speaking German to his family in public, one of his own partners did not help matters when he was quoted as doubting “whether a native-born American could understand even half of what Schiff says, even when he is speaking in English.”

From the outset of the war in 1914, Kuhn, Loeb had stopped financing any transactions, directly or indirectly, for Germany or any of her allies. Late in the summer of 1915, after the Schiffs had returned home from Bar Harbor, Britain's financial wizard, Lord Rufus Reading, arrived in New York as the head of the Anglo-French Commission, hoping to negotiate an Allied loan from Wall Street bankers. Both Otto Kahn and Morti Schiff thought this an excellent moment to dispel forever any notions that the firm had German sympathies, and to have Kuhn, Loeb come out strongly behind the Allied cause. Meeting with Lord Reading, Kahn and Morti assured the Briton that a loan for as much as \$500 million could be obtained for France and England, and without collateral. The young men told Reading that, though they were in favor of Kuhn, Loeb handling the loan, the senior partner would of course have to be consulted before final arrangements could be made.

When Kahn and Morti approached Jacob Schiff, he reacted characteristically. He would approve the half-billion-dollar loan—on one condition. The Allies could have their money if the French and British finance ministers would give Jacob Schiff their assurance, in writing, that “not one cent of the proceeds of the loan would be given to Russia.”

It was like Morti and the pool table all over again. Schiff’s partners were aghast. One could not, in time of war, offer money of that size to one ally at the expense of another. Once again, Schiff’s condition was impossible to fulfill. Lord Reading replied politely that, while he understood Mr. Schiff’s motives, “no government could accept conditions which discriminated against one of its allies in war.” When Reading’s reply was received, a meeting was quickly called in the Kuhn, Loeb partners’ room. Mr. Schiff rose majestically to say, “I cannot stultify myself by aiding those who in bitter enmity have tortured my people and will continue to do so, whatever fine professions they may make in their hour of need. I cannot sacrifice my profoundest convictions. This is a matter between me and my conscience.”

Everyone who knew him knew what he meant. Again and again, he had refused to participate in loans involving Czarist Russia. He had predicted, in fact encouraged, a Russian revolution. He had helped assure that Russia lost its war with Japan. In protest against the massacre of Russian Jews at Odessa in 1905, he had gone to President Roosevelt, urging him to urge the Congress to act against the Czarist government and had succeeded in getting Roosevelt to write a personal letter to the Czar. After Jacob’s speech, there was a short silence. He then offered to resign from Kuhn, Loeb rather than be connected with the loan. Needless to say, his resignation offer was immediately and unanimously rejected. To Lord Reading, the firm addressed a short note, asking to be excused from participation.

That evening, leaving the office, Otto Kahn said sorrowfully to Morti, “The old man was magnificent today, but wait till you see the papers in the morning.” Sure enough, the headlines proclaimed:

KUHNS, LOEB, GERMAN BANKERS,
REFUSE TO AID ALLIES

It was as though a funeral wreath had been hung on Kuhn, Loeb's door. While reaction in New York was shocked and silent, reaction in London was angry and noisy. All at once, the Kuhn, Loeb name became unmentionable anywhere in the city. Doors on both sides of the Atlantic that had been open were suddenly closed.

It seemed to be up to Otto Kahn to do something about it. Certainly no one could sensibly call *him* pro-German. From as early as 1907 Kahn had been quoted as an expert on European affairs, and in speeches he had deplored a Germany being "possessed gradually by a demoniacal, obsessive worship of power and a will toward world dominion." The German people, he had declared, were "misled, corrupted, and systematically poisoned by the Prussian ruling class, their very minds perverted and their moral fiber rotted." He had seen as a young boy in Mannheim the Prussian spirit "ruthlessly pulling down the old Germany, which was dear to me, to which I was linked by ties of blood, fond memories and cherished sentiments." On subsequent trips to Germany he had watched what he called the "sinister transmutation" which Prussianism had effected in Germany and which he felt was a threat to the entire world. Kahn had read Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and understood better than most Americans some of the doctrines—"the will to war, will to power and will to overpower"—that were guiding German thought. In the fall of 1914 he had told Gatti-Casazza to remove all German operas from the repertory of the Metropolitan for the duration of the European war, and his aim was mainly to stop performances of the works of Wagner, which, he felt, "translated Nietzsche's *Übermensch* philosophy into a language disturbingly understandable even to illiterates." This was not easy for him to do, because Wagner's music was perhaps his greatest love. And finally, of course, his own anti-German position was not an easy one. Like Felix Warburg and many other German Americans who were pro-Ally, Otto Kahn had friends and relatives in Germany, and in the German Army.

His sister, for example, was married to a man named Felix Deutsch who was head of one of the largest public utilities corporations in Germany. In March, 1915, Kahn wrote his brother-in-law to say how much he regretted Germany's declaration of war, that he felt Germany had precipitated the war, and that the "rape of Belgium" made him ashamed to be German-born. Deutsch replied curtly and disagreeably, and this inspired Kahn to write

Deutsch a twenty-three-page letter pouring out all his sentiments. The letter, which took him four days to write, reveals him as a stylist of particular power. He accuses Prussianism of

throwing overboard everything that civilization and humanitarian progress of centuries has accomplished toward lessening the cruelty, the hatred and the sufferings engendered by war and toward protecting non-combatants from its terrors ... the violation of innocent Belgium, in defiance of solemn treaties, and unspeakable treatment inflicted on her people, the bombardment without warning of open places (which Germany was the first to practise), the destruction of great monuments of art which belong to all mankind, the *Lusitania* horror, the strewing of mines; the use of poison gases, causing death by torture or incurable disease; the taking of hostages—these are the facts that the noncombatant nations charge against Germany.... Such words and ideas are greeted with contempt by your spokesmen and scornfully termed empty phrases and sentiment. If these are mere phrases, then the whole upward struggle of the world for endless years past has been founded on sentimentality.

Kahn's fat letter to Deutsch was spotted by a French censor, who, in a routine check, opened it to see what the great American financier was saying to the great German industrialist. He soon realized that he had something of possibly great importance. He copied the letter, sent the original on, and delivered the copy to the French Minister of Information. From there it made its way to England, and very soon a copy of Kahn's letter was in every Allied foreign office. Excerpted and reprinted in bulk, in its original German, it soon became a major item of Allied propaganda, and was being scattered over Germany from planes. Kahn, at first, was less than pleased at this development, since he had not intended his letter to his brother-in-law for use as an anti-German leaflet. However, soon after Jacob Schiff's refusal to participate in the Allied loan, Kahn, in an attempt to lift some of the pall that had fallen on Kuhn, Loeb, permitted his famous letter to be published in the *New York Times*.

He continued his work to bring the firm out of its unfortunate spot. Both he and Morti Schiff asked to make private contributions to the Allied loan—Kahn's was for \$100,000—and this also helped. Kahn, who had always

been an Anglophile and was still a British subject, had for several years kept a large house in London called St. Dunstan's, in Regent's Park, which had fourteen acres of gardens and grounds and was one of the English capital's great showplaces. At the time of Jacob Schiff's decision against the loan, "sods of earth" had been hurled at the windows of St. Dunstan's, and now Kahn decided to make a definite move to woo back England's public and financial community.

Presently the *Times* of London was announcing:

The King and Queen are showing great interest in arrangements which have been completed to provide for the welfare of officers and men of both services who lose their sight in the war. The scheme is in the hands of the Blinded Soldiers' and Sailors' Committee, of which Mr. C. Arthur Pearson is chairman....

Mr. Otto Kahn has generously placed at the disposal of the Committee, for the purposes of a hostel, St. Dunstan's.... In the grounds will be installed an open-air club where those of the blind men who wish to live in the country will be taught poultry-culture, garden and farm work, way-finding, marketing, and sports and games.

By the fall of 1915 St. Dunstan's was serving 130 blind British veterans, and the congratulatory mail was pouring in to Otto Kahn. "You have certainly endeared yourself to all on this side of the water," said one. "No single thing that has been done by an American has been such a conspicuous and effective help as the turning over of St. Dunstan's as a hospital and training place for the blind," said another.

In fairness it should be pointed out that not all Otto Kahn's public relations went that smoothly. As his wealth increased to Croesus proportions, Otto Kahn's love of stately mansions became overweening. In addition to St. Dunstan's, he had his Italian villa in Morristown, New Jersey, and no less than three houses in East Sixty-eighth Street. He was in the process of selling these three, however, and of building his huge house at 1100 Fifth Avenue, just down the street from the Warburgs, and, as though one country house weren't enough, he was building another in Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island. Jacob Schiff, who scolded the Warburgs for ostentation, gave up when it came to Kahn. Kahn's Long Island place

would eventually take workmen and landscape gardeners two years to build. It was in the Norman style, H-shaped from the sky, and would require a staff of 125 servants. It was very nearly as big as the old Grand Union Hotel at Saratoga. The Georgian dining room would seat two hundred, and there were so many guest rooms, each with a sunken bath, that a little card rack (of sterling silver) was secured to each door so that servants could keep track of guests, and the guests could keep track of each other. There were miles of formal gardens and acres of hothouses. In a period of wartime belt-tightening, shortages, and general austerity, the Cold Spring Harbor house was widely criticized.

Meanwhile, his celebrated letter to Felix Deutsch had made Kahn in demand as an anti-German pamphleteer. He had wanted, as a boy, to be a playwright, and he took up his pen again with glee. He was best at invective, and his alliterative polemics talked of “perfidious plotters ... architects of anarchy ... violators of international Law.” Germany, he wrote, was guilty of “crime heaped upon crime in hideous defiance of the laws of God and man.” In Germany his attacks were reaching their mark, and presently there was a concerted German propaganda attack against Otto Kahn. He was called a “traitor ... turncoat ... betrayer and corrupter of German morale.” And, inevitably, with these attacks came a wave of anti-Semitism, which, of course, swept poor Jacob Schiff along with it. He was now being vilified by both the United States and Germany. Men like Otto Kahn, the German Government announced, were no more qualified to speak for the Allied powers than Jacob Schiff was qualified to speak for Germany.* These men, said the Kaiser’s spokesmen, were Jews —“outsiders, men without a country, empty of every sentiment except the love of money.” Undaunted, Otto Kahn continued writing essays and making speeches.

While President Wilson continued to defend American neutrality, Kahn became convinced that intervention was inevitable and essential. He had, however, been hesitant to comment on American policy in any of his speeches or essays since he was not an American citizen. At the same time, he had been reluctant to give up his British citizenship for fear that such a move would lead to further criticism in England. In January, 1917, he reached his decision and, characteristically, announced it in the *New York Times*. He would become a naturalized American. He received his final

papers on March 28, and had less than ten days to put forth his interventionist views. On April 6 America was in the war.

Now his speechmaking and propaganda campaign went into full swing. In one of his fieriest talks, called “The Accursed Spirit of Prussianism,” first delivered at a Liberty Loan drive, he spoke of “an abominable spirit . . . and the German Government, obsessed with it, deserves to be called the enemy of the whole human race.” His speeches were printed in newspapers across the country, and in Paris and London. Then, translated into German, they went to the U.S. Government Printing Office, from where, by the hundreds of thousands, they were scattered from the air over Germany. Kahn’s specialty began to be his talks before German-American groups in which he urged them to see modern Germany in its true lights, and to “set their faces like flint against the monstrous doctrines and acts which robbed them of the Germany they loved, the Germany which had the affection and admiration of the entire world.” He spoke to the German populations of Milwaukee and Minneapolis and, in Madison, Wisconsin, announced that he would turn over his entire income for war work and charities—“after deducting necessary expenses for myself and my family.” This news made front-page copy in every city in America, and a joyous Kahn wrote: “What a glory to be an American! What a joy to be alive in these soul-stirring days!” Seldom had a banker enjoyed a war so much, and even more glorious moments were to come. As the German Army advanced toward the Marne, it encountered what it took to be an abandoned convoy of American supply trucks. The soldiers fell upon the trucks, tearing open the packages they contained, which the soldiers expected to be food, only to find bales of Otto Kahn’s propaganda pamphlets. The German soldiers sat around reading what Kahn had to say, and that evening there were several desertions.

The Kaiser’s anger, which had been only barely under control, boiled over when he heard of this incident. Newspapers in Berlin, Frankfurt, and Cologne launched massive attacks against Kahn and quoted the Kaiser himself as saying that Otto Kahn and men like him were “*Schmutzfinken*,” or filthy pigs.

Undismayed by the Kaiser’s nasty-name-calling, Kahn stepped up his pamphleteering. “I wear the vilification of the Boche and pro-Boche as a badge of honor!” he cried. “My name has been on the blackest page of the

Black Book of the German Government for four years.” He then announced his boldest move of all: he would go to Europe himself and “evaluate the situation.” Once again he made the front pages.

It was April, 1918, and the North Atlantic was full of U-boats. Nevertheless, he sailed off for England, not at all sure how he would be received there. Renouncing his British citizenship had, as he expected, been criticized, and also the British had not forgotten Jacob Schiff’s stand on the Allied loan. As recently as February of that year—nearly four years after Lord Reading’s visit—the *London Times* had mentioned Schiff adversely, quoting him as having told a *Times* correspondent that he was “willing to help the Kaiser rather than the Allies.” As Kahn sailed off for Europe, however, his anti-Kaiser position was helped considerably by a published report that Germany now considered Otto Kahn the number one enemy of the state. All submarines in the Atlantic, it was said, had received instructions to torpedo Kahn’s boat, and to give this project top priority. The Kaiser was supposed to have said, “We would rather eliminate him than either the President or Pershing.”*

Though Kahn later confessed to being “frightened” during the crossing, the voyage took place without incident, and Kahn was received respectfully in England, where he was known for St. Dunstan’s, and where he was described as an example of “changed sentiment of Germans in the United States.” He was a far greater success in France, where they remembered Otto Kahn for his work to place French operas in the repertory of the Metropolitan, and they gave him a hero’s welcome. Speaking in French, announcing that he would give 10,000 francs to the French Society of Dramatic Writers, he called France “*la Terre Sainte de l’humanité*,” and the deafening applause is said to have continued for eighty minutes. He had dinner with Clemenceau, who called him “the greatest living American,” and then, though the battle of the Aisne was raging, he paid a visit to the front and dined with General Pershing in a château which had been bombarded by shellfire an hour earlier.* He then went on to Spain and, perhaps, the most important of his contributions to the Allied war effort.

In Madrid, after conferring with King Alfonso XIII, whom Kahn described as “very intelligent, exceedingly well posted and one of the most attractive men I have ever met,” Kahn happened to overhear, at a diplomatic reception, a conversation between “a pair of swarthy fellows.”

The men, speaking in Spanish, apparently assumed that Kahn, an American, could not understand what they were saying. They were wrong. Kahn found some of their remarks highly interesting. There was, one of them hinted, to be an uprising very soon of the Spartacus League in Brussels. The Spartacus League, sometimes called the German Leninists, eventually became the foundation of the German Communist party, and during the war the League had functioned as an underground group to stir up internal dissent and to undermine German unity. (Later, the League's chief, Karl Liebknecht, received a prison sentence for his anti-Junker activities during the war.)

Kahn was immediately aware of how important news of an underground revolution could be to the Allies. Quivering with the excitement of international intrigue, he hurried to the British Ambassador in Madrid. The Ambassador listened gravely to what Kahn had to say, and that evening placed Kahn's report in the diplomatic pouch to London. In London it went directly to Downing Street and into the hands of Lloyd George, who, reportedly, "could scarcely believe what he read. But knowing Kahn's reputation for scrupulous accuracy, he investigated the report and found it true."

Kahn's report persuaded the Allied strategists to move ahead strongly. "He did us great service by reporting on this affair," one of Lloyd George's ministers said later, and it has even been claimed that the final armistice would have been delayed by as much as six months if it hadn't been for the efforts of Secret Agent Otto Kahn.

By the end of the war Otto Kahn was being called "The King of New York." And, in the process, the sour reputation of Kuhn, Loeb & Company at the war's outset had sweetened considerably.

*In 1910 Paul Warburg and Nelson Aldrich together drafted the Aldrich Bill, the first to include central banking as an element of banking reform. Paul Warburg had, meanwhile, set up the National Citizens' League for Promotion of a Sound Banking System. The Federal Reserve Board Act, largely Warburg-designed, was passed in 1913, but the System was not operative until 1915. Warburg resigned from Kuhn, Loeb in 1917 to serve on the Board.

* It was a subtle way to continue to hammer the point, with Americans and Britishers, that Schiff was pro-German—though he never was.

* It is wise to remember that Kahn, at this point, had employed the publicist Ivy Lee to handle his public relations. Though very possibly true, this story smacks of press agency.

* In World War I bombardments often stopped conveniently for lunch.

CALAMITIES AND SOLUTIONS

After the reaction to his war loan stand, Jacob Schiff had little more to say about the war with Germany. One of his rare public statements about the war was made in the summer of 1918, just a few months before the Armistice, when he said, “Though I left Germany as a very young man and adopted this as my country fifty-three years ago, I believe I understand Prussian aspirations and Hohenzollern methods sufficiently to confirm my belief in the most forcible necessity for winning this war completely.” Throughout the war he had concentrated on another, and to him equally crucial, matter.

He had always believed in the principle of *Zedakah*, the charity which literally means “justice.” During his youth in Germany, he recalled, “Kindliness was the keynote of the household and from the first ten-pfennig piece that was received as an allowance it was made our duty to put one-tenth aside for charity, according to the old Jewish tradition.” He had continued this 10 percent tithing system throughout his life and, though he was called one of New York’s foremost philanthropists, he insisted that only what he had given above and beyond this figure could be considered “philanthropy.” He once startled a well-meaning woman who congratulated him on a particularly large gift by saying, somewhat abruptly, “That wasn’t my money.” He meant, of course, that the gift came from the one-tenth of his income that he felt *had* to be given away.

He had an individualistic approach to giving that would have dismayed a modern foundation executive. In addition to having invented the “matching gift” system, he also believed that a man’s giving should be done in his lifetime and, most important, under his personal supervision. In his spare time, he visited the Lower East Side looking for worthy “cases” among

immigrants. He personally headed his pet project, Montefiore Hospital—originally founded for Jewish “incurables,” and later broadened at his insistence—and hired the staff as well as paid regular visits to all the patients. To raise money, he once organized and headed a benefit bazaar in Central Park which netted \$160,000 for the hospital—much more than the most glittering charity ball can earn today. He also believed that self-help was an essential part of any charity, and frequently wrote personal letters to get immigrants jobs. For one young man who wanted to be a merchant he purchased a candy store; for a man who had cut hair in Europe he bought a barbershop. He rented any number of newsstands, and installed his cases behind them. He occasionally hired men directly into Kuhn, Loeb & Company, and his son-in-law, Felix Warburg, adopted his habit of hiring promising youngsters. (He once hired the hat boy at Savarin’s restaurant and made him an office boy; he was George W. Bovenizer, later to become one of the firm’s most important partners. Felix also hired his wife’s milliner’s son.) With J. P. Morgan, Seth Low, and James Speyer, Schiff developed a plan to found “a pawn shop on humanitarian principles,” which became the Provident Loan Society. Each founder contributed \$5,000—and Schiff assessed each Kuhn, Loeb partner in that amount also—and the Society started with capital of \$100,000. Soon, it was loaning out money at the rate of \$34 million a year.

In 1912 the newspapers were full of gloomy talk about trusts and everyone was muttering about the abuses of great wealth. The *New York Times*, however, published an article about what it called “the New York public service trust,” and the men whose charities most benefited the city. “It is impossible to consider,” said the *Times*, “what New York’s so-called public activities would do without these men. As we name things ‘trusts,’ here we have one—it is a trust of public spirit.” Heading this list of leaders were Joseph Seligman’s son, Isaac Newton Seligman, Felix Warburg, and Jacob Schiff. Conspicuously absent from the list was the name of Rockefeller.

The *Times* article distressed Schiff, who believed in the Talmudic principle that twice blessed is he who gives in secret. Though he gave a building to the Jewish Theological Seminary; two buildings to the Young Men’s Hebrew Association; a social hall to Barnard College; the Semitic Museum building, and much of its contents, to Harvard; a large endowment

to Frankfurt University in Germany; and the building which houses the Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa, he would never permit his name to be attached to any of these structures. His single exception to this rule was the Schiff Pavilion at his Montefiore Hospital. He would never discuss the size of his gifts and rebuffed reporters who asked him about his philanthropies. Because of Schiff's secrecy, the exact total amount of his giving is now impossible to calculate. It has been estimated at between \$50 and \$100 million.

In 1906 a small group of the most important men in the German Jewish banking crowd had met at Jacob Schiff's house to discuss a matter of some urgency. Their worry was anti-Semitism. The Dreyfus case had not yet been settled, and the coals from the Kishinev pogroms had not cooled. To Schiff, it had begun to seem as though all the gains which Jews had made over the past hundred years were being threatened and might soon be lost. Out of the meeting came the American Jewish Committee, an organization designed to protect the rights and better the condition of Jews throughout the world. In its way, it was something of an innovation, for the AJC proposed to combine traditional Jewish communal giving with the techniques of such American overseas philanthropies as the Red Cross.

The AJC was an organization sponsored, at the outset, by a mere handful of extremely rich men. It was really all in the family and "in the crowd," and it soon became clear that a less loosely structured, larger, and more formal and all-encompassing sort of organization would be required to do the task the AJC had set for itself. As 1914—"the comma in the twentieth century"—approached, the relief of Jews in Eastern Europe became a far more overpowering problem than that of Jews on the Lower East Side. In Russia and Rumania it had become clear government policy to force Jews to emigrate, but where would they go? The slums of New York and London were overcrowded and seemed incapable of holding any more, while millions clamored to be received. In the salons of Paris, Berlin, and Vienna, anti-Semitic chatter was becoming fashionable, and even certain politicians in Washington and London were making racist allusions with the caricature of the poor Eastern European Jew who had found his way to the Lower East Side or to Whitechapel as their target. Implications of what the Jews would have to face throughout the next half-century were beginning to dawn as, across the Continent of Europe, the lights began to go out.

During the war between 600,000 and 700,000 Jews fled eastward out of Poland and the Baltic countries, and another 100,000 from Galicia and Bukovina. Others escaped westward—half a million to Austria, perhaps 100,000 into Germany. The migrations were terrified and erratic, for no one knew where he was going or whether, or for how long, he would be allowed to stay. Some thirty thousand Jewish refugees camped, without shelter, in a Russian forest. When Turkey entered the war on the side of Germany, there was suddenly a desperate situation for Jewish communities in Palestine. Many Jews in the Holy Land had escaped from Czarist Russia, and they were now suspected as enemy aliens. At the end of August, 1914, Henry Morgenthau, who was United States Ambassador to Turkey, cabled Jacob Schiff asking for \$50,000 in immediate aid. The American Jewish Committee contributed \$25,000 of this figure, Schiff personally gave \$12,500, and the Provisional Zionist Committee another \$12,500. But as the war spread and hopes for an early peace vanished, it was obvious to Schiff that the relief work to be done in Europe was beyond the scope of the AJC.

American Jews were, of course, divided. The AJC was merely another symbol of that division. In a crisis that faced all the Jews, one could not have a factionalized solution. All Jews in America would have somehow to join in a consolidated effort.

There were, at the time, hundreds of Jewish charitable organizations in the United States. In October, 1914, Schiff asked representatives of forty of the largest to meet with his AJC. At that meeting, a committee consisting of Oscar S. Straus, Julian W. Mack, Louis D. Brandeis, Harry Fischel, and Meyer London, who “commanded the respect of every element,” was asked to select one hundred leading American Jews to be the American Jewish Relief Committee. “All Jews,” Schiff announced solemnly, “of every shade of thought, irrespective of the land of their birth, are admonished to contribute with the utmost generosity.” Louis Marshall was to be president of this new organization, and Jacob Schiff the treasurer. Schiff, however, asked that this honor be given to his son-in-law, Felix Warburg.

Working closely with Schiff, Felix decided that the treasurer’s chief job would be to set up a disbursing agency through which American funds could be sent on to Europe. For this purpose—which, at first, seemed simple but which later on became so staggeringly important that it completely eclipsed its parent organization—Felix held his first meeting of

the Joint Distribution Committee of American Funds for the Relief of Jewish War Sufferers on November 27, 1914. This was the famous Joint Distribution Committee which, by the end of the war, was distributing an income of as much as \$16.4 million a year.

The work of the Joint was based on a simple assumption: that Jews had a right either to live where they were or to emigrate; the Joint was devised to facilitate either of these alternatives. As Oscar Handlin has said, “The historic program of the Joint offered all Jews a basis for unity of action. Its American insistence on ‘giving to all an equal opportunity for survival and creative life’ was enriched by ‘the Biblical concept of social obligation and mercy.’ It could therefore rise above all factional divisions.” Stefan Zweig said of the Joint, “Later, at some future date, we shall again gladly and passionately discuss whether Jews should be Zionists, revisionists, territorialists or assimilationists; we shall discuss the hair-splitting point of whether we are a nation, a religion, a people or a race. All of these time-consuming, theoretical discussions can wait. Now there is but one thing for us to do—to give help.”

For the next fifty years, the Joint would continue to exert its unifying force upon the disputatious, splintered Jewry of America. While young Otto Kahn was stylishly aiding the war effort, Jacob Schiff in his twilight years was, in his quiet way, adding even more glory to his name.

The scope of what had been called Schiff’s “complex Oriental nature” was becoming clear. Long before it was fashionable for American millionaires to have humanitarian instincts, he had spoken out for the Negro, for free public education, for the Child Labor Amendment, and for the rights of trade unions. He had an abiding, idealistic faith in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. No wonder he always thought, right up to the time of his death, that the Joint was strictly a temporary organization. He always expected—and, in fact, anticipated—the day when the injustices the Joint was designed to solve would disappear, when the need for the Joint would vanish, and it could be disbanded.

THE RISE OF A HOUSE OF ISSUE

In 1900 Lehman Brothers, though it had been successful, was still considered essentially a commodity brokerage house. In prestige and importance it was ranked so far below Kuhn, Loeb that it was not even considered in the same business. The Lehmans had nothing of the social power of the Seligmans, and nothing approaching the wealth of the Schiffs, Warburgs, or Otto Kahn.

The Lehmans, however, were far from being needy. From cotton brokerage they had branched into commodities underground—particularly petroleum—and Mayer and Emanuel were mentioned in every list of the city's richest men. One of the most spectacular young men in the class of 1899 at Williams College was Herbert H. Lehman. Among the companies his father and uncle had bought into, along with P. A. B. Widener and John Jacob Astor, was the Electric Vehicle Company, an early automobile manufacturer, and the Rubber Tire Wheel Company of Springfield, Ohio, the first American maker of pneumatic tires. Young Herbert arrived on the Williams campus with not only his own car—in itself a rarity—but his own chauffeur. Periodically, Herbert's driver painted the car's license plate with oil, causing dust from the road to obscure the numbers on the plate, thereby making the young dandy difficult to identify by police as he sped about the landscape. It was hard to believe that this high-living fellow would later become one of New York's most meticulous governors, so concerned with maintaining his personal dignity that, for years during his stay in Albany, he refused to dine at his favorite restaurant, Keeler's, for fear it would not "look right to have the Governor seen eating in a public restaurant," and who, at a Democratic function in New York, walked out when he felt he had not been seated properly at the banquet table.

On Wall Street the Age of the Trusts seemed about to pass the Lehmans by. Between 1898 and 1904 alone, over four billion dollars' worth of new securities in industrial combinations had been sold—through bankers—to investors. In 1893 there had been twelve large trusts with an aggregate capital of less than 2 billion dollars. By 1904 there were 318 such trusts, one of which was capitalized at almost a billion and a half. The trust system, which had been a brain child of John D. Rockefeller's lawyers, was to put the voting power of a group of companies into the hands of a group of trustees. Technically, the individual companies would remain independent, as far as their operations were concerned, and therefore they would not be liable to antitrust action. But central control of voting meant that no company could step very far out of line. (Jacob Schiff never approved of voting trusts and the kind of control they gave over company operations, but he sold their securities cheerfully enough.) The theory of the trust was that eliminating competition among the consolidated units would bring about immediate economies and therefore increased profits. It worked—sometimes.

The Age of Trusts was the age of the investment banker. Money needed to launch new enterprises and to put their securities on the market made bankers' contributions essential. Banking houses had had experience selling government and railroad bonds in Europe, and this stood them in good stead. Now they could sell the new corporate stocks—whose values might or might not be watered. As the twentieth century advanced, the European market for American securities became less important; there was a well-heeled investing public in America to consider.

There were companies who figured they could do without investment bankers. In 1902 the Pennsylvania Railroad came up with a plan to bring their line directly into New York City, through tunnels under the Hudson River, which would make the Pennsylvania competitive with the New York Central. There were powerful interests in both New York and New Jersey opposing the plan, but Jacob Schiff, who had been the Pennsylvania's banker for over twenty years, went actively to work rallying support for it, writing a letter to his friend Isidor Straus of Macy's, pointing out the advantages to the city and its businesses and asking for his help.

The bond issue put out to finance the construction of the tunnels was reasonably priced and was considered a bargain, and so the railroad

decided, to save the underwriter's fees, to bring the issue out itself. Schiff advised against this, and the Pennsylvania seems to have been in a rather ungrateful frame of mind, considering all Schiff's hard work. But Schiff accepted the decision in good grace. Soon, however, without the market support and stamp of approval provided by an investment banking house, the tunnel bonds were in trouble, and the price fell so disastrously that Kuhn, Loeb had to step in and perform a last-minute rescue operation. It was a dramatic example to industry of the importance of a banking house and its abilities to find and "sell" a market. It was also the last time a company would ever attempt to offer securities to the public without the backing of a "house of issue."

The investment banks sold securities to the public in any one of, or in any combination of, three basic ways. They might *underwrite*—or, simply speaking, guarantee the success of an issue which they would actually sell. In return for the greater risk the underwriter took, he was given the say on the price the issue could be sold at, to whom it should be sold, where, and by what means. Or a banker might sell securities on the market under a *negotiated* system—selling a company's stocks on a commission basis while, at the same time, lending the company money for its operating, development, or expansion expenses. Ideally, the banker makes money in two ways in such an operation. (This was Joseph Seligman's favorite banking technique with railroads; he, of course, often lost.) The third method was *contracting*, where an investment house bought up an entire issue outright, and then either parceled it out to other houses or sold it exclusively. This was Kuhn, Loeb's favorite way of operating, and to the outsider it might seem to involve the greatest risk. Actually, contracting was seldom done unless an issue was considered a sure bet.

Little of this lucrative business had been done by the house of Lehman Brothers by the turn of the century. In fact, in the first fifty years of its existence, the Lehmans underwrote only one issue—in 1899, for something called the International Steam Pump Company, a pump trust consisting of five pump manufacturers. The combine did not work out well and, to conform with antitrust laws, it was reorganized as the Worthington Pump & Machinery Corporation. Once bitten, the Lehmans dropped out of underwriting for several years. They continued with commodities—cotton,

coffee, and petroleum futures—and, for their own portfolios, bought issues of the day.*

But when Emanuel Lehman died, control of the firm was fully in the hands of the second generation—a group of restless, eager, ambitious boys: Philip, Sigmund, Arthur, Meyer H., and Herbert. Particularly ingenious when it came to banking was Philip, Emanuel's son, and it is Philip Lehman's wizardry—along with the strength of his will and the assertiveness of his personality (“At anything he did, Philip *had* to win,” says a member of the family)—that has established the Emanuel Lehman branch of the family as the dominant one in the firm's affairs.† In an era when no self-respecting private banker would deign to back retail stores, textile manufacturers, clothing or cigarette makers—to say nothing of the indignity of mail-order houses and five-and-ten operations—Philip Lehman led his cousins directly into such businesses with quickly profitable results. Very early, Lehman Brothers helped finance and develop the American Potash and Chemical Corporation—and continued to back it until it was sold, for a nice figure indeed, to the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey.

It was Philip Lehman's generation that first married into the elite of New York's German Jewry. He and his cousins married, variously, Strauses, Altschuls, Lewisohns, Lauers, Limburgs, Fatmans, Goodharts, and—in the case of his cousin Sigmund—first-cousin Lehmans, thereby aligning the Lehmans with other fortunes and banking houses. The marriage of Arthur Lehman to Adolph Lewisohn's daughter was of prime importance, for it brought the Lewisohn mining enterprises under the Lehman wing.

It was at Philip Lehman's insistence that the firm first began to venture into underwriting, the step that would lead Lehman Brothers into investment banking. He had often discussed it with his best friend, Henry Goldman.

Henry's father, Marcus Goldman, had died a few years before Philip's, and the proceeds of the business old Marcus had carried in the lining of his hat had left his heirs more than comfortably off. Henry, too, was ambitious and eager to move into something beyond commercial paper sales—in which Goldman, Sachs had become the leading dealers in New York. Business mergers were not so fashionable in those days as they have become, and so the two friends did not consider this. But they did toy with the idea of forming an underwriting firm of their own, Goldman & Lehman.

But the pressures, both practical and sentimental, not to abandon their respective family firms were strong, and so at last they decided to collaborate in underwriting as a side line. Each house would continue with its specialty—Lehman with commodities, Goldman, Sachs with commercial paper—and the two friends would go in as partners in underwriting ventures, splitting the profits fifty-fifty.

Goldman, Sachs, like Lehman Brothers, was a firm tied together with tight matrimonial knots. Two of Henry Goldman's sisters were married to two Sachs brothers. In 1906 Henry Goldman's brother-in-law's sister, Emelia, married a man named Samuel Hammerslough.* Hammerslough's older sister, Augusta, was married to a man named Samuel Rosenwald, and their son, Julius Rosenwald, who nobody thought would amount to anything, had gone to Chicago at a tender age and bought up a mail-order house called Sears, Roebuck & Company. The relationship may have been tenuous, but when Julius Rosenwald wanted money he approached his "cousin," Henry Goldman. Julius wanted to expand Sears, Roebuck, and he asked Goldman for a loan of five million dollars.

Goldman introduced Rosenwald to Philip Lehman, and the two bankers offered Rosenwald a better suggestion. Why not make a public offering of Sears stock—and make ten million dollars? It was a fairly daring notion, because there had never before been a mail-order security on the market. There was no way of telling how the stock-buying public would react to Sears. Rosenwald agreed, and the foundation of a gigantic mail-order house was laid. Few Sears, Roebuck shareholders today regret Philip Lehman's and Henry Goldman's idea.

Lehman and Goldman went on to cooperate in other issues, nearly all of them for Goldman, Sachs clients. They became specialists in helping privately owned companies "go public," an operation that has always been heavy with risk. In 1910 they underwrote an issue for the Underwood Corporation; in 1911 they introduced Studebaker. A year later the friends put the first shares of a variety chain store on the market; it was the F. W. Woolworth Company. The following year they presented the Continental Can Company. In all, the two men collaborated in fourteen major securities issues, and were considered Wall Street's hottest young underwriting team, when the guns of August were fired in 1914.

Henry Goldman's brother-in-law, Sam Sachs, had returned from a trip to England just after the war's outbreak. While there, he had assured Goldman, Sachs's correspondent firm in London, Kleinwort, that Goldman, Sachs stood firmly behind Great Britain. In New York, however, to his dismay, he learned that Henry Goldman had already made several pro-German speeches.

When the Anglo-French loan had been turned down by Kuhn, Loeb, it had gone to J. P. Morgan, and most leading Wall Street firms were asking Morgan for participations. However, Henry Goldman, one of Goldman, Sachs's most important partners, had announced that he wanted nothing to do with the loan, and for outspokenly pro-German reasons. There was, furthermore, a rule at Goldman, Sachs that the firm could sponsor no issue unless all partners agreed unanimously. An intense, high-strung, didactic man, when Henry's partners and sisters begged him to modify, or at least conceal, his feelings, he refused and his public utterances became more frequent and startling. The Prussianism that Otto Kahn deplored, Henry Goldman admired. He quoted Nietzsche to anyone who would listen. Sam and Harry Sachs, meanwhile, went directly to Morgan as Otto Kahn and Morti Schiff had done, to take personal subscriptions in the loan in an attempt to save the day. But Goldman's damage had been done, and Goldman, Sachs was another German firm to fall under a heavy pall.

Even the United States' entry into the war in 1917 did nothing to curb Henry Goldman's tongue. A situation which the family has called "painful"—and which must have been a great deal more than that—had begun to exist on both a business and domestic level. While Henry Goldman ranted, his nephew Howard Sachs was on active duty with the 26th Division; Sam Sachs's son Paul, another nephew, was with the Red Cross in France; other members of the joint families were selling Liberty Bonds, winding bandages, and appearing at rallies to "bury the Kaiser."

The Kleinwort bank in London cabled New York to say that Goldman, Sachs was in danger of being blacklisted in England. At that point Goldman himself realized what was happening and came to his partners to say that he guessed he was "out of step." They heartily agreed, and his resignation was accepted.

For several months, though no longer a partner, Goldman kept his office at Goldman, Sachs. But as the wartime atmosphere grew more heated, this

became an impossible arrangement. He departed to a midtown office of his own. With Henry Goldman went his share of the firm's funds, which was sizable. This fact did the firm even more damage than his pro-Germanism had done, and since Goldman, Sachs was not so fortunate as to have a crusading patriot like Otto Kahn working for it, the firm fell upon lean times from which it did not emerge until after the war. This did little to endear Henry Goldman to the rest of his family. Henry Goldman and Samuel Sachs never spoke again. Neither did Henry and his sister Louise, who was Sam Sachs's wife. The hostilities continued in the next generation, and to this day there are hardly any Goldmans who are on speaking terms with any Sachses.

In the early 1930's Henry Goldman traveled to his beloved Germany with the idea of settling there permanently. With Hitler rising to power, this was certainly a mistake. Goldman was seized and searched and was subjected to "many other humiliations," according to the family. He returned to New York, a defeated and disillusioned man, and died there, a victim of his own dream of Nietzschean power.

Philip Lehman, meanwhile, was as surprised and distressed about his old friend's feelings as Goldman's partners were. After an initial meeting on the subject, the two men parted angrily. When Goldman left Goldman, Sachs, the break between the friends was final. Lehman Brothers and Goldman, Sachs continued to try to collaborate on underwriting issues, but the relationship between the two firms was not what it had been. There were frequent arguments. Why, the Lehmans demanded, did Goldman, Sachs take all the credit, with their name showily at the top of the ads, for ventures for which Lehmans had supplied the money? Goldman, Sachs, in turn, asked why the Lehmans expected half the profits on deals originated by Goldman, Sachs. The arguments frequently disintegrated into angry name-calling. "They were both too ambitious," one banker has said, "to stay married." But there was more to it than that.

Henry Goldman's replacement at Goldman, Sachs was a suave and polished Southerner named Waddill Catchings, whose background was in the iron and steel industry. Presently Catchings was attracting national attention with a series of books, written in collaboration with William T. Foster, which expanded grandly, and with a certain literary style, on the

increasingly rosy future of America's postwar economy. The Lehmans, however, distrusted the flamboyant Catchings. Philip Lehman felt Catchings "lacked balance," was "too ambitious and aggressive" and "too optimistic." (Events a decade later, in 1929, proved the Lehmans right and caught Catchings unaware.) At the same time, a Brooklyn youngster just out of P.S. 13 named Sidney Weinberg had been looking across the harbor to the towering financial district of Manhattan and decided that was where the money was. He had gone, by his own account, "to the top of the tallest building" in the district, which was then 43 Exchange Place, and started working his way down, asking for a job at each floor. He made it all the way to the second floor before he found Goldman, Sachs and was hired as an office boy. Catchings had taken Weinberg under his wing, and the Lehmans thought Weinberg had promise.* But Weinberg was impatient with the Lehman connection and wanted to break it. The relationship between the two firms grew steadily more bitter until, at last, a formal memorandum of separation was drafted.

The memorandum listed sixty different corporations that the Lehmans and Goldman, Sachs had jointly underwritten, and these firms were then divided according to which firm had "prime interest." Goldman, Sachs got forty-one companies, and the Lehmans were granted the remaining nineteen. Sears, needless to say, went to Goldman, Sachs. Each banking house agreed not to invade the territory of the other.

Hard feelings continued to exist between the two firms until as late as 1956, when Sears, Roebuck decided to set up a sales-acceptance subsidiary. At that point Sidney Weinberg called on Robert Lehman, Philip Lehman's son, and asked Lehman Brothers to resume its historic place in Sears financing.

In the long run the split benefited both firms, but Lehman Brothers most of all. It forced Philip Lehman to go into investment banking on his own, without depending on the crutch of Goldman, Sachs. As one investment banker has said, "I think it's the best thing that ever happened to Lehman because they took off their coats, rolled up their sleeves, and went out to get some business. Lehman always had a lot of money, but that's different from being aggressive to get business. After the dispute they became real go-getters."

What the Lehmans got, among other things, was the solitary elegance of Number One William Street—the structure, first built by the Seligmans, which makes Lehman Brothers the only investment banking house in Wall Street to occupy a building of its own. (And quite a building it is, with its own eighth-floor dining room and its own gymnasium.) The Lehmans have continued Philip's policy—backing issues, which, at the outset at least, seemed too “undignified” for other bankers to handle. Among these were early stocks in airlines, electronics, motion picture and liquor companies, all of which have helped the Lehmans become what *Fortune* calls “one of the biggest profit makers—many believe the biggest—in the business.” Today Lehman partners sit on boards of dozens of U.S. corporations, guide several billion dollars' worth of investment funds, including the assets of the Lehman Corporation—itsself a half-billion-dollar affair.

The Lehmans like to describe themselves as “merchants of money,” intermediaries between men who want to produce goods and men looking for something to do with surplus funds. They can also—thanks to continuing family control—call themselves “the oldest partnership” among U.S. investment houses. But they are still interested in what Philip Lehman first described as “trying to buy something for a dollar, and selling it for two.”

Socially, from Philip Lehman's generation on, the Lehmans have also done well, though they have been called, as a family, “dull,” and “cut-and-dried,” and “bankerish.” Another friend says, “The women in the Lehman family have all been charming, but a lot of the Lehman men are rough—real horse-traders, like Philip.” Certainly the Lehmans, as a family and as a banking firm, have, in the long run, been vastly aided by Herbert Lehman. Though certain members of the family, particularly from the Philip Lehman branch, remain to this day scandalized by the political career and affiliation of Herbert, and by his retirement from Lehman Brothers, which some considered a breach of family trust, most admit that he lifted the family name to a position of national importance, and that his reputation for integrity and efficiency, first as Governor, then as Senator, cannot but have helped the bank.

Though he was a creditable Governor of New York, it was as a United States Senator, in his seventies, that he had his finest hour and displayed the spunk and grit for which the family is known. The Senator from Wisconsin,

Joseph R. McCarthy, brandishing one of his usually bogus sheets of paper, stood up in 1950 to claim it was a photo-stat of a letter by Owen Lattimore to the Office of War Information urging that the OWI hire men sympathetic to the cause of Communist China. Senator Charles Tobey of New Hampshire asked McCarthy why he did not offer the letter for publication in the *Congressional Record*. He could not, McCarthy explained, because the letter was marked “secret.” Then why, Tobey asked, was McCarthy revealing its contents on the Senate floor? McCarthy’s evasive reply to this was that the letter was accompanied by documents attesting to “unusual personal habits” of persons high in government.

This was too much for Herbert Lehman. He stood up to ask if he could be allowed to read the letter.

“Does the Senator care to step over?” McCarthy shouted, and, with that, Herbert Lehman strode across the Senate aisle and said to McCarthy, “May I see the letter?” He held out his hand for it.

McCarthy, shaken, answered, “The Senator may step to my desk and read the letter.”

“I am here to read the letter,” said Lehman. “Will the Senator from Wisconsin let me see the letter?”

Clutching his sheaf of papers to his bosom, his voice rising shrilly, McCarthy whined, “Does the Senator wish to come close enough to read it?”

Lehman stared at him contemptuously for a dramatic moment, still holding out his hand. Then he turned on his heel and walked back to his seat.

The letter, when eventually published, turned out to be harmless, as Lehman had suspected. And in the meantime his brothers and partners back home in South William Street must have realized that Herbert, “dirty Democrat” though he might be, “wild-eyed friends” like Roosevelt, Al Smith, and Jim Farley though he might have, was nonetheless showering even further glory upon the House of Lehman.

* When young Herbert Lehman became a partner in 1908, he was startled to see how many “speculative” and “cat-and-dog stocks his father, Mayer, and his Uncle Emanuel had bought for the firm. There was a large block of stock in the Electric Boat Company—soon to be filling the Atlantic with

submarines—plus 1,000 shares of something called the Bethlehem Steel Company.

† While the Mayer branch, which produced Herbert, has become known for public service.

* A former peddler who had migrated to Springfield, Illinois, and gone into the men's clothing business. Hammerslough always liked to recall the extra-long trousers he cut for one of his best customers, Abraham Lincoln.

* He is now the senior partner at Goldman, Sachs, and one of the half-dozen most powerful men in Wall Street.

“PFLICHT UND ARBEIT”

In a way, there was almost a logical *rightness* in the moment Jacob Schiff chose to die. Though he was a more sophisticated financier than Joseph Seligman, he was nonetheless a financier from the nineteenth century. In a sense he was a bridge between the Seligmans and modern banking. He would not have fit, furthermore, into the new decade that was under way. In his old-fashioned white ascot ties and his frock coats, he would not have belonged in the 1920's.

The summer of 1920 passed as all the others had. There was the same rigorous schedule. After winter in the city, June and July were spent at the house on Rumson Road in Jersey. August was passed at Bar Harbor. While there, having failed with his children, Jacob tried to instill his love of hiking and mountain climbing in his grandchildren; they disliked it even more than Morti and Frieda had, but, since he expected them to, they went along with him. Always a believer in exercise, he had taken up cycling. On Sundays in Bar Harbor, the family cycled—the younger children speeding on ahead, then stopping to wait until their elderly grandparent, pedaling slowly, made his way up to them. To his grandchildren, he was “Grandpa”; to his servants, “the old gentleman.” There were only a few changes in his ways. One was his sudden habit of reaching down to pick up a baby grandchild and cuddle it against his whiskered chin, letting it sniff the fresh rose in his buttonhole. Every morning at Rumson Road he would walk in the garden, saying his prayers. Then he would pick a red rose for each lady in the house. These were little gestures of pleasure and love which he had never permitted himself before.

In September the family came back to Rumson Road. There was only one difference. Though he would not admit it, and would let no one speak of it,

Jacob Schiff, now seventy-three, was unwell. On the Day of Atonement, though Therese and his servants begged him to relax his rule, he insisted on fasting, saying, finally, that if he was going to die he would prefer to do so observing the strictures of his faith. He was reminded that the Scriptures do not require an ill person to fast; nonetheless, he replied, he wished to. The next day, very much weaker, he announced one of his rare changes in plan: he wished to return to New York right away, instead of waiting until the end of the month. It was September 23. Wordlessly, the family packed to move back to the city.

No. 965 Fifth Avenue was a considerably more tasteful house than the old “house full of horrors” at 932. Schiff’s friend Sir Ernest Cassel had become his artistic mentor, and the lighted drawing-room cabinets displayed the beautiful collection of majolica and one of antique porcelain which the London financier himself had given to the Schiffs. Sir Ernest had helped Schiff to assemble a good collection of paintings of the nineteenth-century French School—“Stick to a *school*, stick to a *school*,” Sir Ernest had reminded him—and a splendid collection of Oriental jades and crystals. The only relics of the old house were the portraits of Jacob and Therese Schiff, and the bronze bas-relief by Augustus Saint-Gaudens of the two Schiff children, the one for which Frieda and Morti had been made to pose through an entire Christmas holiday.* Sir Ernest had not effected these changes in the Schiffs’ style easily. Repeatedly, Jacob had complained about “extravagance” and “too much luxury,” and had refused to spend money on this or that article Sir Ernest had wanted him to buy.

Jacob, too, had been right about Morti’s tendencies toward extravagance; for all his father’s efforts to bend the twig toward frugality, Morti had become a bit of a spender. After becoming a Kuhn, Loeb partner at the age of twenty-three, Morti became very social, joining what was becoming known in the postwar years as “the International Set.” Though colorblind, Morti had an insatiable love of paintings and was the despair of dealers, who said they could never show Morti Schiff a second-rate piece of work and convince him it was a masterpiece. Morti had started a collection of art, books, bindings, and furniture that would eventually be declared worth nearly a million dollars. He had built a huge house on hundreds of acres of ground at Oyster Bay, Long Island, where Otto Kahn soon became a neighbor, and had rebuilt another old house in Paris. His days of bicycles,

new or secondhand, were long gone by. In fact, to Jacob Schiff's distress, Sir Ernest was stimulating Morti's prodigality. "You know," Sir Ernest once said to Frieda, "I rather encouraged Morti's spending money because I believe a man must learn how to spend gracefully, but not showily. Your father, you know, didn't always hold with my ideas."

Now the children and the grandchildren were summoned to the great Fifth Avenue house to await what they were certain was the inevitable. Waiting, they whispered the story of the old gentleman's insistence on his Yom Kippur fast, two days before. The fasting of the man who, as a boy, had climbed down a drain pipe to avoid a Hebrew lesson, seemed to give the end of Jacob Schiff's life, which came quietly on September 25, a kind of pious logic, too. In silence, the family filed past, saying good-bye. The next morning the *New York Times* devoted its lead story and its entire second page to his career.

The funeral was an extraordinary affair, not for its pomp and grandeur, though there was plenty of that, and not for the weight of the testimonials that poured in from heads of state, government officials, public, and the press, though there was plenty of that, too. It was remarkable for the sheer power of the emotion that gripped the thousands of mourners through the ceremony. Jewish survivors of the pogroms of Russia felt they owed their lives directly to him. To millions who had never laid eyes on him, who knew him only as the founder of the American Jewish Committee and the guiding spirit behind the Joint Distribution Committee, his name stood for salvation. Outside Temple Emanu-El, on both sides of Fifth Avenue, people stood, many in beards and *shaitels*. Jews from the Lower East Side, whom Schiff had made it a point to visit on foot, had now made it a point to come, on foot, to bid him good-bye. The crowds stood in silence, reverentially; a few wept; many knelt in prayer. Rich and poor alike were gripped by a shared sense of loss, and when the bier made its slow progress down the temple steps, the whole corner of the city seemed to grow silent.

There was the usual speculation in the press about the size of his estate. Estimates ranged from fifty to two hundred million. Actually, his estate amounted to some forty million dollars. It was clear that he had given away much more than that amount in his lifetime.

As the twenties progressed, it began to seem as though Jacob Schiff had been one of the last pious Jews in the German Jewish upper crust. It was almost as though, with Schiff gone, everyone could unbend a bit and, without fear of his displeasure, convert. The 1920's saw the conversions of a number of Seligmans, who became, variously, Methodists, Unitarians, Episcopalians, Christian Scientists, and Roman Catholics. Otto Kahn, who had begun to say privately that "St. Paul, St. Francis, and Jesus were the three greatest figures of history," was toying with the idea of becoming a Catholic and had begun to "play down" his Jewish background. (A story, possibly apocryphal, which for years circulated within the crowd, has it that Otto Kahn's two daughters, Margaret and Maude, were carefully shielded from the fact that they were Jewish; when a mischievous French governess broke the news to them, the two little girls threw their breakfast trays on the floor and cried in their room for hours.) Mixed marriages were suddenly fashionable, and when they occurred, it was usually the Jewish partner who converted—though at least one non-Jewish young lady, marrying a Seligman, became Jewish after being given a "rabbinical bath."

Instead of Jacob Schiff's great pride in his faith, a certain ambivalent attitude began to reveal itself among upper-class Jews toward their religious heritage. At times, it was possible to believe that they were Jews in one breath and non-Jews in the next—that whether to be Jewish or not was rather like selecting the right fork for the right course at dinner. Even those who had converted felt it wrong, really, to deny that they were Jewish, leaving the impression that they regarded Jewishness as a racial as well as a religious matter. At the same time, they did not believe in "making a point" of being Jewish, regarding it as a "personal" thing, implying that Jewishness is purely a religious affair after all.

For the Jew, living in two communities was always something of a strain. When the edges between these communities began to blur, certain confusions of feelings and loyalties were inevitable, and never was this more apparent than when the third generation of the German Jewish crowd grew to maturity. Young Will Guggenheim was not the only man to harbor an illusion that he was not really Jewish. Adolph Lewisohn's son, Julius, cherished the same fantasy, as did Joseph Seligman's grandson, Joseph, II.* In Germany the oldest Warburg boy—Felix's brother Aby—had, after boldly marrying a gentile girl, begun to disintegrate. Was it the pressures of

trying to conform to both communities that made a man like Aby an alien in each? For religion, Aby Warburg began to substitute astrology. He became obsessive about his personal enthusiasms, which included the study of primitive cultures. He became a compulsive book collector and writer of articles on such divergent subjects as tapestries, postage stamps “as symbols of political power,” Indian snake dances, primitive religions and superstitions, paintings, and theatrical drawings. His library eventually grew to contain some sixty thousand volumes plus twenty thousand photographs, mostly bearing on the revival of Greek antiquity. He also assembled a remarkable collection of photographs dealing with the persistence of symbolism through the ages, which is strangely like Sigmund Freud’s studies which were being carried on at about the same time.

For all this squirrel-like collecting, Aby was dissatisfied, troubled. During World War I he had a nervous breakdown from which he never fully recovered, and he developed, according to the family, a number of “phobias,” one of which was other Warburgs. He blamed the Warburgs for the fact that he was Jewish—a sensible enough conclusion—and became convinced that his two American brothers, Felix and Paul, who had become so rich by way of marrying Loebes and Schiffs, were dealing unfairly with him in a financial sense. He spent whatever time was left over from collecting writing long and bitter letters to his family, outlining his grievances. There were times when the mention of his brothers could send him into an uncontrollable fury, and at times like these only the gentle-natured Felix, whom he loved, seemed able to calm him. “It was as though,” says one of the family thoughtfully, trying to puzzle poor Aby out, “he hated *being* a Warburg and yet, at the same time, couldn’t escape the fact that he *was* a Warburg.” Aby died in Hamburg in 1929. His wife, Mary, managed to hold up her side of the mixed marriage somewhat better. Watching Hitler’s rise to power, she began quietly organizing the removal of her husband’s collections elsewhere. Working through the American Consul in Berlin, Aby’s nephew, Eric Warburg, arranged to have the material shipped to England. It took 535 crates on two small steamers, the *Hermia* and the *Jessica*, to get Aby’s collections down the Elbe, across the North Sea, into the Thames, where they now form the basis of the library at the Warburg Institute of London University. While the shipment was being

loaded, Aby's widow, Mary, served tea and sandwiches on the dock to the packers, who were anti-Nazis.

Another mixed-married gentleman was Jimmie Speyer, the inheritor, in New York, of his Uncle Philip's Speyer & Company. Like Aby Warburg, Jimmie Speyer could never seem to decide—to his own satisfaction, at least—just how Jewish he was. Speyer was a small, dapper, starch-collared, and rather prickly man. He was so proud of his name that he would never allow his firm to take a lower position than anyone else's in the floating of a loan, and this Speyer vanity had, by the 1920's, meant that the firm had declined somewhat in power. Nonetheless he occupied a high-ceilinged, Old World office in a Pine Street building modeled after the Palazzo Pandolfini in Florence, from which he operated a patrician, one-man banking house. Mr. Speyer's personal bearing was so Old World itself, so Continental, as to have seemed downright exotic. He was so distinctly European that it seemed unlikely that he would have been interested in things American at all. Yet he was the guiding spirit behind the Museum of the City of New York, the handsome colonial structure on upper Fifth Avenue which houses the city's most delightful collection of Americana. He was a director of Mount Sinai Hospital, a steady donor to Jewish charities, and an outstanding critic of clubs and schools that practiced racial or religious discrimination. Yet he was a member of the Racquet Club, where other Jews were not even welcomed as guests of members. His pride in his Speyer name had caused him to have created, by royal decree, some artificial Speyers. Once, lunching with the old Kaiser Wilhelm (*that* was how Old World Jimmie Speyer could be), Mr. Speyer mentioned his sorrow at having no sons to carry on. "But surely there are some Speyers left in Frankfurt," said the Kaiser. "None," said Speyer sadly. "This will never do," said the Kaiser. "There must *always* be a Speyer in Frankfurt!" And so the Kaiser conferred a title upon Speyer's brother-in-law, Eduard Beit, authorizing Eduard to add "von Speyer" to his name. It was an ennobling "von" that even such favored "court" Jews as Albert Ballin did not have.

Jimmie Speyer's country house on the Hudson was called "Waldheim," but he married a gentile girl named Ellin Prince whose ancestry traced back to colonial days. He was so proud of his wife's antecedents that, in his listing in *Who's Who*, he included her parents' names (including her

mother's *maiden* name). Yet his own parents' names, Eduard Gumpertz and Sophie Rubino Speyer, he omitted.

While some members of the crowd seemed uncertain whether or not to claim their Jewish antecedents, others were quite definite about it. One such was Howard Goodhart, Mrs. Hattie Lehman Goodhart's son. He, at one point, evolved a theory that he was directly descended from Philo Judaeus, the Greco-Judean philosopher of 20 B.C. Goodhart's reason for thinking so was simple. He believed that, as generations passed—among Jews, at least—certain names kept reappearing, though with their spellings slightly changed. The fact that his father's name was Philip J. Goodhart was enough to convince Howard that it all must have started with Philo Judaeus. To reinforce his connection with Philo, if not quite to prove it, Goodhart hired, at some expense, Professor Goodenough at Yale to write a book about Philo. Though the book was not a great best-seller, Mr. Goodhart liked it, and gave it to all his friends.

“The golf,” as it was fashionable to call it, was beginning to dominate the upper-class sporting scene. With the golf came the country club, and soon the Harmonie Club was relinquishing its title as the most fashionable Jewish club to the Century Country Club in White Plains. For years the Century was an almost exclusively German club, with an unwritten rule against “Orientals.” It was, furthermore, almost exclusively Wall Street, with, as it was said, a few “token Gimbels” from the world of common trade. Only recently has the social cast of the Century begun to change, but a distinction is still drawn between the Jews of the Century and those of the Sunningdale Golf Club in Scarsdale, which is considered by many German Jews to be somewhat *arriviste*.

There were, as the twenties progressed, certain families of the crowd who wished to expand their social horizons somewhat and who were impatient with Jewish country clubs. Morti Schiff, for instance, was much fonder of the Piping Rock Club, one of Long Island's most elegant gentile clubs. He hardly ever appeared at the Century. Other families got themselves in odd situations. Lehmans, Warburgs, Stroocks, Ittleasons, Stralems, and Seligmans began, in the twenties, to winter at Palm Beach (needless to say the crowd vigorously eschewed the Jewish mecca, Miami Beach), where they mingled comfortably in gentile circles, without ever being invited to

join the elite Christian Everglades Club. At the same time, though not admitted to the Everglades, Henry Seligman was, from his summer home in Elberon, invited to join the equally elite and equally Christian Deal Golf Club, leading to the observation that Henry was a “seasonal Jew.” On Long Island the glossy Maidstone Club and the more modest Devon Yacht Club are considered gentile clubs. Yet a New York family, blackballed by the Century, changed their name, applied to the Maidstone, and were taken in, doing much better in alien corn.

Otto Kahn’s Morristown estate adjoined the grounds of the super-upper-class (and gentile) Morristown Club, which Kahn had not been invited to join. At one point, the club wished to enlarge its golf course and inquired of Kahn whether he would be willing to sell a few hundred acres. Kahn, with his perfect sense of public relations and his love of the grand gesture, said that he would gladly *give* the club any land it needed. Overwhelmed, the club accepted—and then guiltily decided that it had better ask Mr. Kahn to join. It did, and Otto Kahn accepted with pleasure—though one of the members commented later, “He was a gentleman. He never came around.”

It was at about this time that Adolph Lewisohn’s daughter Adele, who had married Mayer Lehman’s son Arthur, had her name inserted in the New York *Social Register*.

It began to seem as though the devout and pious Jewishness of Jacob Schiff had had a point. What would he have thought of these carryings on? With his philosophy of *Pflicht und Arbeit*—duty and work—he had been the conscience of the German Jewish crowd. But he was gone.

* A copy hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

* Whose tragic solution was to commit suicide, as his cousin, Washington Seligman, had done in 1912.

PART V

NEW YORK 21, N.Y.

THE END OF A LINE

J. & W. Seligman & Company, though it had been first eclipsed by Kuhn, Loeb and, next, by the Lehmans—to whom the Seligmans sold their building—still managed to produce moments of fiscal excitement. In 1910 Joseph Seligman’s ancient rival, J. P. Morgan, was an old man who increasingly allowed others to make his decisions and handle his affairs, and one of these was George W. Perkins, who laughed out loud when a “visionary nitwit” named Will Durant told him that there would one day be as many as fifty thousand automobiles on the roads of America. Shouting, “Impossible!” Perkins threw Durant out of the office. This was too bad for Morgan, because Durant lowered his sights a notch and approached the Seligmans.

Durant’s burgeoning General Motors Corporation had already absorbed a number of individual companies—Buick, Oldsmobile, Cadillac, and some twenty others. But even the Seligmans, perhaps because they knew they had a Morgan reject, were initially wary. They agreed to take on Durant, but on staggeringly stiff terms. In return for underwriting \$15 million worth of Durant’s GM notes,* the bankers demanded that Durant put up *all* his company’s assets as security, in addition to giving control of his board to the Seligman group. Durant also wanted \$2.5 million in cash, and for this the Seligmans made him put up \$4 million worth of stock as security, and charged him 6 percent interest for five years. As an indication of how shaky a venture Durant’s was considered to be, the lawyers who drew up the papers on the deal cut their normal fee to less than one-half, in order to get cash and not stock as their fee.

This was in 1910. Three years later, Albert Strauss, who, with his brother Frederick,* had been one of the first nonfamily Seligman partners and who

had gone on the board of General Motors, was offered \$30 a share for his General Motors common stock. Strauss declined to sell, and the Seligman family held on to theirs. By the war's end, in 1919, the original GM common was selling for \$850 a share.

The House of Morgan's less than clairvoyant appraisal of the automotive industry is often given as the reason why the Ford Motor Company for so many years refused to go public. Motor stocks of the period were considered so speculative that "Only the Jewish banks will handle them," and this would not have suited Henry Ford, Sr., a virulent anti-Semite. Nevertheless, the leading gentile banker, Morgan, would not see Ford. It was in the Dearborn, Michigan, *Independent*, which Ford controlled, that he caused to be published for the first time in America the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, the spurious document purportedly prepared by an international conference of Jews and Freemasons, outlining their plans to take over the world. (A proven fake, it was traced to an anti-Semitic Russian writer in Kishinev at the time of the pogroms.) As a result of this, it was many years before most Jews would buy a Ford car.

And yet, after Henry Ford's death, it was a Jewish bank, Goldman, Sachs & Company, which first brought out Ford stock and, under the guiding genius of Sidney Weinberg, devised the intricate construction of the Ford Foundation. Today Weinberg is the chief financial adviser to Henry Ford II, and is on the board of directors of the Ford Motor Company. The ironies of high finance never cease. Where great money is to be made, much can be forgiven.

The individual members of the Seligman family, meanwhile, who had always referred to Mrs. Astor and *her* crowd as "the butterflies," were beginning to display some oddly butterfly-like characteristics of their own. The men of the family seemed definitely to prefer being gentlemen of leisure to working, and a number of the ladies were devoting themselves as assiduously as Mrs. Astor had to being hostesses. There was, for instance, Mrs. Henry Seligman, the wife of the original Jesse's son. Formerly Addie Walter, she was a double Seligman, having married, first, Joseph's son David, and, upon his death, his first cousin. All through the twenties her parties, in her houses in Elberon, Palm Beach, and in East Fifty-sixth Street, were celebrated. She had a butler, De Witt (not to be confused with De Witt

Seligman, another cousin of her husband's), who she liked to say "set the standard for a whole generation" of German Jewish families. He was stationed at the foot of the stairs, and arriving guests learned to fear his look of icy disapproval. When Addie Seligman died—at the depth of the depression in 1934 and at the height of her entertaining career—her dinner plates alone, not including cups, saucers, or soup bowls, brought \$2,660.92 at auction. De Witt, a millionaire from tips he had received from guests, retired.

But for all the good times, there were some members of the family who noticed some disturbing Seligman symptoms. Joseph's grandson, George Hellman, was alarmed at what was happening to the Seligman birth rate. At the procreative rate of the original David and Fanny Seligman—who produced eight sons and three daughters—there should have been, Mr. Hellman computed, some 1,536 Seligman boys in New York in his own generation. Yet the opposite was the case. Early Seligmans had the knack of producing mostly boys; later generations produced female children or none at all. The Seligman name, in barely three generations' time, was dying out.

It was a genetic fact that other families of the crowd were having to face. It was almost as though, as the families grew rich and the need to produce sons grew less acute, fewer sons were born.

Needless to say, the number of Seligman-named partners downtown at J. & W. Seligman & Company was diminishing at a similar rate. During the 1920's the firm's seat on the New York Stock Exchange was held in the name of Jefferson Seligman, the fruit-and-ginger and dresses-from-Klein's-distributing partner. At the time of the stock market crash of 1929, Jeff Seligman was there, doing his bit. According to one partner, "In October, 1929, when the panic was a day or two old, Jeff appeared on the floor of the Exchange for the first time in years. He hadn't done a stroke of work since anyone could remember. I don't think he executed any orders—he simply appeared, wearing a flower in the buttonhole of his Prince Albert One of the afternoon papers commented on the calming effect induced by the appearance of 'the well-known international banker.'"

Calming effect or no, Jeff Seligman did nothing to improve the Seligman birth rate. He died in 1937 at the age of seventy-eight, leaving, according to Geoffrey T. Hellman, "a somewhat diminished estate, which consisted, in

part, of a rather large remainder of ginger and Klein's dresses," and without issue.

The Seligmans had become very family-conscious and family-proud and, at one point, hired a designer and a printer to prepare an elaborate *Seligman Family Register*. Bound and published in a limited edition of one hundred copies, it is printed on heavy vellum and contains the names of 255 people, plus portraits of the original eleven Seligman children from Baiersdorf. Through the *Register*, it is possible to trace the Seligman family's weblike interconnection with other families of the crowd—the Beers, Walters, Goodharts, Guggenheims, Lewisohns, Wassermanns, Nathans, Lilienthals, Lehmans, Wolffs, and Loeb's. The Seligmans become the true anchor family of the crowd. It is possible to see how the Seligmans can—and do, with a reasonable degree of accuracy—get themselves connected with the royal House of Windsor, and be able to speak of “our cousin, Princess Margaret.” (“Do you suppose,” suggests one member of the crowd slyly, “that Princess Margaret ever speaks of ‘My cousins, the Seligmans’?”) The connection works this way: Isaac Seligman, in London, married, in 1869, a Miss Lina Messel. A later member of the Messel family was Sir Oliver Messel, who is related to a young man named Antony Armstrong-Jones, now Lord Snowden. The Seligmans could also boast a British knight of their very own, Isaac's son, who became Sir Charles Seligman.

But, for all its luster and what George Hellman somewhat wistfully calls the “slight haze of social prestige” that still clings to the Seligman name, it is presently the responsibility of just two small boys, both great-great-grandsons of Joseph, to see to it that it is carried on.

- * In cooperation with Lee, Higginson and the Central Trust Company.
- * No kin to the single-“s” Strauses.

THE FALL, AND AFTER

Felix Warburg's brother Paul had had an unhappy childhood, picked on by his older brothers Aby and Max, who called him ugly and weak. Even his mother seemed not to understand him. By the time he had reached young manhood, he had developed a distinct inferiority complex, and was forever apologizing for himself. He had a habit of prefacing his remarks with "You won't like what I'm going to say, but..." Still, he was possibly the most brilliant and versatile of all the Warburgs and, for years, was a sort of itinerant Kuhn, Loeb partner, spending half of each year in New York and the other half with the Warburg bank in Germany, serving as a financial liaison between the two countries. He had always considered American banking primitive and haphazard. He had met secretly with Senator Nelson Aldrich at Sea Island, Georgia, and had worked out the Federal Reserve System, and yet when Aldrich tried to give Paul Warburg full credit, Paul, typically, refused to take any credit whatever. He was offered the post of Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board but, insisting that he was unworthy, refused any position higher than Vice Chairman. As anti-German feeling mounted during World War I, and as Kuhn, Loeb became the target of much of this, Paul felt it deeply. In 1918 he wrote to President Wilson saying, in his customary self-effacing way, that he felt a naturalized citizen ought not to have such a high post with the Board. Secretly he hoped Wilson would not accept his offer to resign, but, to his discouragement and dismay, Wilson did. Even sadder, Paul Warburg returned to New York from Washington, and became chairman of the board of the Bank of Manhattan. In his spare time, he wrote a monumental history of the Federal Reserve System, and a number of sad, introspective poems.

He was, as it turned out, a Cassandra, and, since prophets of doom do not usually find a sympathetic audience, Paul Warburg was made even more unhappy. As the 1920's progressed, he began saying that the prosperity was false and could not last, that the bubble would burst. For this sort of talk, he was soon the most unpopular man on Wall Street. "Here comes old Gloomy Gus!" someone shouted in 1928, when Paul Warburg entered the Century Country Club, and he was booed at a directors' meeting. He went right on, though. Early in 1929 in an annual report of the International Acceptance Bank, Paul stated flatly that climbing prices of stocks were "in the majority of cases quite unrelated to respective increases in plant, property, or earning power," and he also predicted that if "orgies of unrestrained speculation" were not curbed and controlled, "the ultimate collapse is certain not only to affect the speculators themselves but also to bring about a general depression involving the entire country." There were more boos and hisses. This statement was issued in March. The "ultimate collapse" came barely six months later. How right Paul Warburg was need hardly be mentioned, but when he tried to say, "I told you so," in 1930, he was even more enthusiastically disliked.

Meanwhile, there were other problems—disturbing political developments in Germany. Paul and Felix Warburg both felt that the future boded ill for Jewish banks in Germany, and wanted to liquidate M. M. Warburg & Company. But brother Max, head of the Hamburg house, was stubborn. He could, he insisted, "make a deal" with this man Hitler.

The great stock market crash of 1929 affected each banker differently, but those few who had taken Paul Warburg's advice found themselves considerably better off. One of these was Paul's brother-in-law, Morti Schiff. Poor Morti. For all his attempts to move with the International Set, most of his life had been spent squarely under his father's thumb. Now he was to have only a little over ten years of freedom. He died, suddenly, in 1931, after having a pleasant dinner with his daughter, Dorothy. Paul Warburg had warned Morti to "get out of the market" in 1929 and to put his funds into cash. When Morti's estate was appraised, he was found to have left \$28,718,213 in securities, plus property in France worth around a million dollars, a book, binding, painting, and furniture collection worth £153,427, and—thanks to Paul Warburg—\$7,683,527 in cash. Between the time of the estate's appraisal and its distribution to his heirs, the value of

Morti's securities dropped 54 percent. If it hadn't been for all that cash, things would have been difficult. As it was, Morti's heirs were very proud of him. For all Jacob Schiff's worries about Morti's extravagance, Morti had managed to put aside a tidy sum.

Goldman, Sachs was less fortunate in the crash. Under the influence of optimistic Waddill Catchings, the firm had, in 1928, somewhat belatedly decided to get into the investment-trust field—in which a banking house formed a trust, made investments, sold shares to the public, and hopefully kept a fat share for itself. Catchings' idea was to form the Goldman, Sachs Trading Corporation, capitalized at \$100 million, and to sell 90 percent of its shares to the public, keeping 10 percent for itself. The firm then merged this interest with the Financial and Industrial Corporation, which in turn had stock control of the Manufacturers Trust Company. All this might have put Goldman, Sachs in an enviable position if it had been done in 1923 instead of 1928. As it was, the interfacings were so complicated that it took ten years of legal wrangling to straighten out who owed what and to whom after the crash. Catchings, meanwhile, had withdrawn from the firm and had gone to California to be a radio producer.

The market collapse found others in embarrassing positions. Otto Kahn's older daughter Maude had married Major General Sir John Marriott, and had moved to England, and, sometime before the crash, Kahn had sold Maude large blocks of five different securities. All five, by 1930, were nearly worthless when Maude gave them back to him, so that he could sell them at a convenient market loss of \$117,000. Or so it seemed to the Pecora Investigating Committee in 1933, looking into "under-the-counter" dealings such as this one in an attempt to fix the blame for 1929. Otto Kahn, with his customary urbanity, denied that there had been anything "peculiar" about this intrafamily transaction. When it also turned out that Kahn had paid no income taxes for the years 1930, 1931, and 1932,* Kahn politely explained that, "apparently," he had suffered such heavy losses that he had had no income to declare. When pressed, he admitted that he simply could not explain why he had paid no income taxes. He was, he said, "abysmally ignorant of income tax returns," which were handled entirely by an accountant "in whom I have the deepest trust." As usual in these investigations, no one on Wall Street was really hurt, but the Pecora Investigation did result in a tightening of banking and investment rules, in

the creation of the Securities and Exchange Commission, and in the end of unrestrained finance.

In those parlous early days of the Great Depression, even families who had come through the crash intact felt it not only wise but fitting to reduce their scale of living. Mrs. Henry Seligman, whose fortune had undergone only small damage, kept De Witt but, to trim expenses for appearances' sake, dismissed her footman, John.

Not so Adolph Lewisohn. While everyone else instituted small economies here and there, he went right on living like a potentate, spending as much as, if not more than, ever. He kept his four houses—at 881 Fifth Avenue, at Elberon, at Prospect Point on Upper Saranac Lake, and “Heatherdale Farm,” at Ardsley-on-Hudson in Westchester County. At the Ardsley place he had, in addition to magnificent hothouses that grew exotic plants of every order, a miniature railroad and his own private blacksmith shop. His wife had died at an early age, and from that point onward, to his family's distress, Adolph kicked up his heels. He became incorrigible. Wringing his hands, his son Sam came to him and cried, “Father! You're spending your capital!” “Who made it?” Adolph Lewisohn replied.

He had always loved music, and had never been able to forget the days when he had been a choirboy in the Hamburg Synagogue. Now, in his seventies, he suddenly took up singing again. He hired a number of singing teachers, including the then well-known J. Bertram Fox. Whenever Adolph entertained—which was often—he required his guests to listen as, in a thin and quavery voice, he sang German *Lieder*, a repertory of songs by Schumann, Schubert, Mozart, and Brahms. To the family, it seemed undignified, but, as if the singing weren't bad enough, at the age of eighty he took up tap dancing. Adolph argued that he enjoyed these pastimes. He said that tap dancing was good exercise, and that singing helped him in public speaking.

He loved to take excursions, by motor or by train. Throughout the depression, he moved grandly about, back and forth to Europe and between his various residences. With him, in a long procession of chauffeur-driven automobiles (or private railroad cars, or roped-off sections of first class) went his retinue—his personal secretary (male), stenographer (female), valet, chef, singing teachers, dancing teachers, a French instructor, and his personal barber, Gustav Purmann. (Purmann's salary was only \$300 a

month, but Lewisohn also tipped him regularly with \$500 checks, Impressionist paintings, eggs and chickens from “Heatherdale Farm,” and, on at least two occasions, Buick automobiles.) Then there were his friends.

The boy who had enjoyed reading the *Fremdenliste* now liked to surround himself with people of every variety. Perhaps because of his family’s hostile attitude toward his spending, Adolph Lewisohn’s personal *mishpocheh* was composed of guests and *onhenger*. In return for their board and keep and traveling expenses, he asked only that they keep him pleasant company.

He preferred creative people (some jealous souls said that he also preferred gentiles)—writers, painters, singers, dancers, actors. He favored “unknowns,” whose talents he could discover and help promote. (Basil Rathbone was an early member of the Lewisohn entourage whose promise was fulfilled.) Also, since he was such a merry widower, he had no objection to young ladies who joined his parties and whose function was mostly decorative. Members of the *mishpoche* were always welcome at any and all of the Lewisohn houses, and at times the troupe of followers grew so large that if a friend didn’t keep careful track of his host’s next-day plans, it was easy to get left behind.

As a host Adolph insisted on a few prerogatives. Though he was more a listener than a talker, he did, whenever he had anything to say, demand that everyone else in the room be silent. He enjoyed playing bridge, but had a highly individual approach to the game. The following is a typical Lewisohn bridge contract:

Lewisohn (dealer): “One club.”

West: “Two diamonds.”

North: “Two spades.”

East: “Five diamonds.”

Lewisohn: “One club.”

The hand was played at one club.

In his gold-and-white ballroom at 881 Fifth Avenue he held, for years, his famous New Year’s Eve parties. As originally conceived, they were thrown for a specific list of guests, including all the German Jewish upper crust. But the parties became so popular, and gate-crashers became so numerous, that they became, in effect, great open houses for all New York. One New Yorker, who grew up in the 1930’s, recalls that he never knew there was any

other way to pass New Year's Eve than to dress up in white tie and tails and go to Adolph Lewisohn's. It was understood that there was only one rule at these parties: No guest was to remove more than a single bottle of liquor, which could be concealed under a coat.

Looking back, it seems a miracle that no more was ever stolen. But only occasionally did a Lewisohn party get out of hand. Mr. Lewisohn's chief steward always stationed himself at the foot of the marble basement stairs, to keep an eye on the collection of precious stones and jewels that were displayed there in lighted glass cases—many of the stones uncovered during the Lewisohns' mining adventures. And, at one party, an unidentified man in an oversize overcoat appeared, swaying, at the top of the stairs. He shouted once, "Down with the filthy capitalists!" Then he lurched and fell all the way down the stairs amid the exploding champagne bottles that had been concealed about his person.

But under ordinary circumstances the highlight of the evening was when the round-faced little host—looking, indeed, like an elderly choirboy—got to his feet and began to sing.

In New York and Europe he had begun to buy paintings of the Barbizon School—Dupré, Daubigny, Jacque, and Français—which was then "fashionable." Few people had bought Impressionists in any quantity. But on the advice of a woman friend who had told him that it was more fashionable to be unfashionable, he sold his Barbizon pictures at the top of their market and bought, canvas for canvas, an equal collection of Impressionists at the bottom of their market, turning a tidy profit in the transaction. People thought he was crazy, and giggled about the "cheap paintings" silly Adolph was hanging on his walls—by such painters as Renoir, Cézanne, Monet, Degas, Gauguin, and a youngster named Picasso. One little Monet cost him only three hundred dollars in 1919. By the late twenties Adolph was saying proudly, "That little canvas is worth ten thousand dollars!" Today it might bring a hundred thousand.

As he grew older and began to realize his dream of great wealth, he began to cherish another ambition—not only to be "a rich man," as he put it, but to be loved as "a citizen." He wanted to be identified with his city and with his country, and he rankled, as did so many others of the crowd, at being labeled "a leading Jew." As the thirties progressed, and news from his

native Germany grew more distressing, this became increasingly important to him.

In his efforts to be a friend to mankind, he began a long program of giving away lordly sums to worthwhile causes and institutions. Many of his philanthropies are well known—the Lewisohn Stadium, the Pathological Laboratory Building at Mount Sinai Hospital, the School of Mining at Columbia, the Orphanage of the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society in Pleasantville, New York. But of other deeds less has been written, such as his work in the cause of prison reform. He once confided to a friend that as a child in Hamburg after his mother's death and his father's remarriage he had often felt like a prisoner in his father's house. His youth, he said, had given him an unhappy taste of what men in confinement suffered. He labored and gave money to improve conditions in prisons, to establish agencies that would help former prisoners find jobs after their release, and dreamed of a day when prisons could be done away with altogether. He was much ahead of his time in this, and was also a regular "prison visitor"—a charitable activity that has never been popular in this country, though it is in England. He used to speak proudly of the time he had dinner with a convicted murderer.

But somehow, for all his work and all his philanthropies, some mysterious ingredient that it took to be loved always eluded him. He never seemed to achieve Jacob Schiff's prestige. For all his entertaining, he never matched the Seligmans' social status, and, when his son Sam married Joseph Seligman's granddaughter, Margaret Seligman, the Seligmans sniffed their disapproval.

He used to say, "I wouldn't mind losing all my money. I don't have to live the way I do—I could live very simply. But I'd hate to be thought a *fool*." More than anything, he dreaded appearing ridiculous. And yet—with his round little figure, his polished bald head, his nearsighted eyes peering through their comically thick spectacles, in his spotless gray spats and his vests aglitter with shining black buttons; throwing his increasingly unwieldy parties, surrounded by his fawning retinue of "friends"—he did, at times, seem the butt of all jokes. He was a Jewish Great Gatsby in the wrong decade, and, as a result, he always seemed a little inappropriate.

As an old man, he began to dictate his autobiography which he titled, significantly, "The Citizenship of Adolph Lewisohn." It was never

published, and it is a fascinating—and also, in some ways, baffling—document. He mentions his marriage to Emma Cahn of New York in 1878, but never mentions her by her first name again. A few references to her follow—always as “my wife” or “Mrs. Lewisohn.” He took her to England on their wedding trip aboard the Cunarder *Russia*. She complained about their stateroom, which was next to the coal chutes, but nothing could be done about it. It was also a business trip for Adolph, and he wrote: “We could not always be together, for in London I had to be at the office while my wife went out to see the sights.” He added: “I suppose that generally it would be considered a hardship to have to attend to business while traveling, especially on a wedding trip; but, with the right spirit, business with its interesting contacts not only is a constant education but becomes a splendid pastime.” Adolph’s wife then drops from the pages completely.

The rest of the book concerns itself with Adolph’s many successes in the copper industry. He does not mention his wife’s death in 1916. He never mentions the five children she bore him, or his grandchildren. He seems to have been a man consumed, early in life, by himself.

But his son Sam always stuck by him and, in Adolph’s later years, seemed to have been the only one who truly loved him. Sam was a witty, intelligent, and charming man. But even with Sam, Adolph was distant and reserved, too locked in his private grief and loneliness to be father. When Sam married Margaret Seligman, he brought his young bride to live in his father’s house. They had their own apartment on an upper floor, but they always took their evening meal with the old gentleman. Their four daughters were born and raised there.

One granddaughter, Joan Lewisohn Simon, wrote an admittedly autobiographical novel called *Portrait of a Father*, in which she has harsh things to say about both her father and grandfather, the latter of whom she describes as looking like “a turtle standing on its hind legs.”

The little girls would dine with their nurse and governess upstairs, and each evening at precisely three minutes past six, just as the liveried butler was removing the service plates, they would hear the creak and rattle of the elevator ascending. Then the gate would clank open and shut, and their grandfather’s footsteps would shuffle across the thick carpet toward the dining room. The servants would stiffen and eye the little girls warningly. “Best manners!” hissed the governess as their grandfather walked to the

head of the table and removed a little black book from his vest pocket. He would then proceed to read to them, in a thick accent which they couldn't understand, from the book. The girls and the servants would sit in numbed silence until he finished this ritual. Then he would bow slightly, turn, and depart.

The little girls interpreted it as a kind of blessing. It wasn't until years later that they discovered that the black book was his engagement book. He had been reading to them, every night, his list of his week's appointments.

Joan Simon remembers being eighteen in the Fifth Avenue house and "sitting downstairs, waiting nervously for an evening date, on a stiff wooden chair adjoining a long formal table that in a club would have been arrayed with magazines," and hearing, to her "dismay," the elevator landing. It was her grandfather, and he came into the room and sat in another stiff chair—her chair's twin—a table length away from her to wait for his chauffeur to pick him up for a dinner engagement. There they sat, "two occupants of the same house for eighteen years," and could find nothing to say to each other. Finally they spoke of the weather, then "recoiled into silence."

It was even harder for Margaret Seligman Lewisohn, a beautiful and intelligent woman herself. Joan Simon has spoken of how awkward her mother used to feel in the house while the great New Year's Eve parties were going on—parties of which she was officially the hostess, and yet not really. In his ninetieth year—his last—Adolph Lewisohn sang and danced at his New Year's Eve party until 3 A.M.

The disappointing size of his estate was the cause of many bitter scenes. His heirs, who in 1930 had expected thirty million dollars to divide between them, found, eight years later, only three millions. (Today his descendants rather wistfully say that at one point he was worth two hundred million.) Though he left, among other things, a priceless collection of paintings, two of his granddaughters found themselves quarreling over possession of a Grand Rapids telephone stand.

One granddaughter, who did not live in the same house with him, remembers him kindly. "He had," says Mrs. Richard Bernhard vigorously, "the most wonderful knack of coming out with the punch line, putting the capstone on every argument. You could talk to him, and you wouldn't believe he was even listening to you—then out it would come." Once, she

recalls, when her late husband, a partner in Wertheim & Company, had been offered a particularly tempting new job in England in the late twenties, they took the question to Mr. Lewisohn, the family patriarch. He listened in silence to all the younger man's arguments for going back to England—or perhaps he wasn't listening. Then suddenly he raised his head and said, "Your forefathers came to America because it was the land of promise." That was all. Mr. Bernhard stayed in New York.

As a boy in Hamburg, Adolph had taken long, solitary walks in the woods outside the city, picking wildflowers. He had once created his own little herbarium which he kept flourishing in his window overlooking the canal. In his great Ardsley estate, he had fabulous gardens and huge hothouses filled with growing plants. He used to like to take his friends and various tutors on walks through his gardens, and at times he would stoop and talk tenderly to the flowers.

Toward the end of his autobiography, he makes this haunting statement: "As I sit here in the comfort and leisure of my home, dictating from time to time these random memories of a long life, I feel that I am talking, not to the public, but to a kindly indulgent company of my friends ... but the distance between human hearts seems greater than in the old days."

It was. But he never knew why.

* Neither, for the same period, had J. P. Morgan, Jr.

THE END OF A DREAM

In the early 1930's there suddenly appeared a fictitious Warburg. He was, or so he signed himself, Sidney Warburg, and he made his appearance as the author of a pamphlet titled *The Resources of National Socialism: Three Conversations with Hitler*. In a preface to this apologia, this Warburg claimed to be the son of Felix Warburg. Felix had four sons—Frederick, Gerald, Paul, and Edward—but no Sidney. Sidney Warburg was a hoax. No Warburg ever had a conversation with Hitler. But one, Paul's and Felix's brother Max, came close.

Max Warburg, head of M. M. Warburg & Company in Germany, was, as the family used to say, “not a typical Warburg.” Typical Warburgs were dark and flashing-eyed, with wide foreheads and prominent noses. Max, however, looked like his mother's family, the Oppenheims, with blue eyes, fair hair, and a small nose. These physiological details are important since during Hitler's rise it was often helpful for a Jew not to “look Jewish.”

Max Warburg joined the German Army as a young man, and chose the smart Hussars. He loved his uniform and was such a good soldier that, as a special favor, he was permitted to attend Officers Corps meetings, even though he knew that as a Jew he could never receive a commission. Nonetheless, in his early twenties he had written to Grossvater Warburg saying that he wanted to make the German Army his career. Grossvater was flabbergasted, and wrote back saying that he didn't know which was worse—having a son who would turn his back on the family bank in favor of the army or tolerating the humiliation of a son who would never be more than a noncommissioned officer. At last Max gave in and returned to Hamburg to learn banking.

Max was something of a tuffhunter. As part of his training, he was sent to England for a year, where he worked for the House of Rothschild. He was a familiar figure at West End parties and, to keep the various members of the English aristocracy straightened out, sat up at nights memorizing Burke's *Peerage* and Debrett. He was remarkably adaptable, and, according to the family, by the end of that year in London Max was "more British than the British," with an impeccable Etonian accent. Returning to Germany, he became a close friend of Albert Ballin, the famous court Jewish friend of the Kaiser, who headed the enormously prosperous Hamburg-America Line, which was one of the greatest factors in German life, not just as a business but also as Germany's most powerful advertisement of itself to the world at large.

Though court life in Germany was strict and rule-ridden—the rule that Jews were not received was one of the most unshakable—suddenly Max Warburg, along with Ballin, was a familiar figure on the Kaiser's yacht. As the century moved into its third decade, the Hamburg-America Line became notably Hitlerian in its stance, and Max Warburg had become a member of the Hamburg-America's executive committee.

In retrospect, there were many ironies in Max Warburg's life. Certainly his special treatment began to convince him that he was somehow specially equipped to handle "the Jewish question," as it was being called in Germany. During World War I Max was financial adviser to the Imperial Government of Germany, and at the war's end he was appointed to a special committee to assist the German peace delegation at Versailles. He was so devotedly German that, when he saw the "humiliating" terms of the treaty submitted by the Allied Powers, he promptly resigned from his committee post and had demanded that all the other members resign as well. But poisonous myths were being created—that the German Army had never been defeated but had been stabbed in the back by "the November criminals"—the Republicans, the Socialists, and the Jews. Soon "the Jew Max Warburg" was being named among those responsible for the Versailles Treaty, and, as the false rumors spread, he was called the infamous treaty's architect. An attempt on his life was planned, and for several months after Versailles Max was forced to hide in the country outside Hamburg. It was during this period that his brothers in America, given the perspective that distance provides, began urging Max to leave Germany.

But Max was too much of a German. When the German Republic was coming into being, Max was offered his choice of two posts: Minister of Finance or Ambassador to the United States. To everybody's surprise, he turned them both down—for reasons that revealed a certain ambivalence in his nature. He would rather not accept the post of Minister of Finance, he said, because he considered the job "too big and too important," because the problems facing the young Republic were "very grave," and because "any mistake which I might make would reflect on all German Jewry." He turned down the ambassadorship saying that, as head of M. M. Warburg for many years, he was "more accustomed to command than to obey." He added that "An ambassador is nothing more than a glorified messenger boy."

For all this loftiness, even arrogance, of tone, it is quite clear that by 1930 Max Warburg was a seriously frightened man. His main concern became saving, if at all possible, the Warburg bank and properties in Germany. To do so, he used his old connections with the Kaiser and the imperial court to become a close friend of the prominent Nazi, Hjalmar Schacht, president of the Reichsbank, the German Federal Bank.* Schacht often turned to Max for advice in financial matters, and continued doing so for several years after Hitler came to power. Through Schacht, Max became convinced that the Warburg bank would never be seized and that he himself might be to Hitler what Albert Ballin had been to the Kaiser, the court Jew. Alas, as the months marched relentlessly onward, this possibility seemed less than remote, particularly to Max's despairing brothers in New York. A law of April, 1933, decreed that all Jews be dismissed from government service and the universities, and they were also barred from the professions. Yet a week later, Max Warburg was dining with his friend, the Nazi Schacht. In September, 1935, marriages between Jews and persons of "German blood" were forbidden, and Jews were deprived of virtually all their remaining rights.

Yet Max Warburg still hung on to the family bank and, that winter, submitted to Schacht the Warburg Plan—a system designed to facilitate the emigration of Jews out of Germany. The Warburg Plan would help *other* German Jews to escape; Max himself still seems to have believed he would be spared. Schacht spent several months going over the Warburg Plan, submitted it to a number of committees and "experts" on the "Jewish question," and the plan is said to have rested for several days on the desk of

the *Führer* himself. However, though Max made several inquiries about the status of his plan, very little seemed to have been done about it. The Warburg Plan was still passing from desk to desk in the Nazi regime in the autumn of 1937 when Max Warburg, still harboring a hopeless hope that his plan would save the Jews of Germany, sailed for New York from Hamburg to find supporters in America. He was still in New York in 1938 when word reached him of the burning of the shops and synagogues, and it was only then that he saw the futility of returning to Germany. Shortly afterward, the 140-year-old bank was taken forcibly away from the Warburgs. Max, an old and broken man, asked his son Eric, already a citizen, to help him get his American citizenship.

In the United States Max began to write his memoirs, in which he spoke candidly of what it was like to be an important Jew surviving under Hitler until as late as 1937–1938. The manuscript, in the early 1940's, was accepted by the Macmillan Company for publication, and an advance was paid. But the Warburg family, now that the United States was in the war, became fearful that “the moment was not right” for such a document. Perhaps, all things considered, it wasn't. Too many terrible fires were already burning. Max withdrew the manuscript and returned the advance, and now, when much that it may have contained could be enlightening, both of the Nazis he knew and of his own complex character, it has disappeared. Max Warburg became an American citizen in 1944, at the age of seventy-seven, and died two years later.

Eric Warburg, who had considerably more foresight than his father and who was the first of the German Warburgs to become a United States citizen, enlisted in the U.S. Army early in the war, becoming one of the few German-born officers in the American forces. In the customary Warburg way, with great *élan*, Eric was able to avenge his father's treatment in Germany, and to even the Warburg score with the Nazis. In the African campaign, as a Lieutenant Colonel in Air Force Intelligence, Eric's knowledge of the language enabled him to interrogate shot-down German soldiers. He took part in the Normandy invasion and, when Hermann Göring was captured, was Göring's chief U.S. interrogator. The interrogation lasted forty-eight hours, and, though grueling, the session was conducted with perfect Warburg aplomb.

Eric usually had the last, sardonic word. Once, when he was escorting a captured German general to the billet in a farmhouse that had been assigned to him, the general protested the accommodations violently, shouting, “*Ich bin dock ein General der Wehrmacht!*” Eric Warburg, with splendidly quiet tact, replied, “*Ja, aber leider haben wir Sie nicht erwartet.*” (“Yes, but unfortunately we weren’t expecting you.”)

After the war it was Eric who persuaded the Allies to let the family bank in Hamburg resume operations, and he is now the senior partner in the Hamburg office, though both he and his young son, Max II, remain U.S. citizens.*

The war drew families together as randomly as it flung them apart, and in New York the effect of Hitler’s policies toward Jews was most profound. It was the end of a dream. The dream had managed to survive, almost intact, the First World War. That war had been easy to blame, as Otto Kahn had done, on “the Prussian ruling class.” Part of the dream had involved romantic associations with the homeland and sentimental nostalgia for “the old Germany” which, in the mind’s eye, had always been green and springlike:

*Denk’ ich an Deutschland in der Nacht
Dann bin ich um den Schlaf Gebracht....*

But an even more important part of the dream had been the German Jew’s notion, in Germany and America, of his “specialness.” When the German Jew thought of himself, he tended to do so in terms of the poetry of Heine and the music of Mendelssohn, and the many Jewish contributions, which every good German Jew could recite, to German science, education, and industry. As all these were systematically erased in Germany, New York’s German Jewish families looked at one another in horror, reappraising all the things—their German culture and language, their German steamships, their German wines—from which they had once drawn a sense of importance and superiority. With a heavy feeling of loss, they took up the task of gathering scattered members of their families in from the flames of Europe.

The Lehmans, for instance, were among the families who established special trust funds to help relatives abroad, and how delicate and painful a

problem this could be is clear from a letter written by Herbert Lehman, by then Governor of New York, to his niece, Dorothy Lehman Bernhard whom the family had placed in charge of this trust, in 1939. When it came to who was a “relative” and who was not, Mrs. Bernhard had found it difficult to draw the line, and the governor was not of much assistance:

I have taken note of the very long list of people who have written asking for help but to whom you felt we could not give assistance because their relationship could not be proved, or because they were too old, or undesirable for emigration. While many of these cases are undoubtedly worthy or very pathetic, I think you will have to maintain the position you have already taken.... I think that we have assumed all the responsibility that we dare to undertake, and those people who are not related or not connected will have to be helped through general funds. The list for whom we have already issued affidavits is really a staggering one, and I believe we now must simply permit those who wish to emigrate to work through usual channels. I hate to take this position because I know of the urgency of the situation....

The letter closes on this dismally prophetic note: “I think, however, that these people who have written us are in no different position from the thousands of people who need assistance and must be helped, if at all, through general funds.”

Therese Loeb Schiff worried about her half-brother, Jim Loeb, who still lived on a forest estate outside Murnau, Germany. After many years he had married a woman named Toni Hambuchen who had been his nurse and companion through some of his worst periods of depression. Working on his collection of rare books, the two had become virtual recluses, and rarely ventured outside their house. Still, the citizens of Murnau had grown fond of their mysterious and lonely neighbors, and on James Loeb’s sixtieth birthday they had given him the Freedom of the City. He accepted the honor shyly, and withdrew to his house. Soon afterward, Therese Schiff received word that both James Loeb and his wife had died, quietly, within a few weeks of one another. This was in 1933, but poor Jim Loeb’s struggle with Nazi Germany was not yet over.

Soon Murnau extended the Freedom of the City to Adolf Hitler. James Loeb had died without direct heirs, but he had become attached to his stepson, Joseph Hambuchen, Toni's son by a previous marriage. The bulk of the Loeb estate went to Joseph—which was fortunate, since Joseph had American citizenship through his stepfather and, as a result, escaped having his property seized by the Nazis. The collection of books was hastily shipped to England, where it was stored throughout the duration of one war. He had bequeathed his art collection to the Munich Museum, where it still is, though since Hitler James Loeb's name has never been mentioned in connection with it. Jim Loeb had been concerned about his mental health, and about his brother Morris, the chemist, who was certainly “peculiar,” and about his sister Guta, Mrs. Isaac Newton Seligman, who was in a New York State sanitarium. And so Jim Loeb had given several large sums of money for the foundation of a neurological and psychiatric research center in Munich under Dr. Binswanger, who had treated him. The research center was a project that excited him even more than his library, and plans for it had filled the last months of his life. But Loeb's building, taken over by the Nazis soon after his death, was turned into a center for experiment of race-superiority theories, and his name was scratched from the stone.

In 1947 Felix Warburg's son Paul was making a tour of inspection of the American Zone in Germany with Ambassador Lewis Douglas, and the two men stopped at an American Army guest house in Murnau, outside Munich. The first thing young Warburg saw upon opening the door was a portrait of his great-grandfather, Solomon Loeb. With a start, he realized that this was his Great-Uncle James Loeb's house, and that the kindly, worried, dyspeptic founder of Kuhn, Loeb & Company, one of New York's greatest Jewish banking houses, had gazed dispassionately upon a German drawing room throughout the rise and fall of Hitler's Third Reich.

The ironies go on and on. In the early 1930's Otto Kahn, in his sixties, had suddenly been smitten with a longing to return to Germany. Writing of the cities of his youth, Mannheim and Bemberg, he said: “How lovely those places are! What a romantic spell attaches to them! The older I get the more I develop a regular sentimental ‘Heimweh’ in the spring.... *Mein Herz ist nicht hier.*”

In Mannheim, where Kahn's homesick *Herz* lay, his father had founded a reading room for workers, and Kahn had continued to support it. In 1932 Otto Kahn sent his contribution of a thousand marks to the Bernhard Kahn *Lesehalle* of the Mannheim *Volkshochschule*, saying, as he did so, that he couldn't continue his support "with self-respect as a Jew if, after the lapse of another year, the Hitler party continues to be by far the strongest and most popular party in Germany." In much less than a year the Nazis had closed the library, fired the director, confiscated the books, and that dream was over. Sadly, Kahn declined an invitation to attend a dinner of the Academy of Political Science when he heard that the German Ambassador to Washington would be there. He advised his steward, also, to serve no more Moselle and Rhine wines at the Kahn table, and all future orders from his wine merchant in Frankfurt were canceled.

Finally—the most painful decision of all—Otto Kahn discontinued plans, which had been quietly undertaken for some time, to convert to Roman Catholicism. He simply could not bring himself to desert his people at a moment when they faced their greatest crisis. As he said, at a banquet for the Joint Distribution Committee, "This is the time for every one of us to heed the call of the blood which courses in his veins and loyally and proudly to stand up and be counted with his fellow Jews." Yet we can almost hear him add, "*Mein Herz ist nicht hier.*"

Other Jews, who had accused Otto Kahn of being a passive anti-Semite, and who never realized that he was merely indifferent to Judaism, were jubilant. "At last Otto Kahn is *bar mitzvah!*" they cried. In the winter of 1934 he went, as usual, to Palm Beach, returning to New York at the end of March. On March 29 he went to his office, and there, rising from luncheon in the Kuhn, Loeb private dining room, he fell forward, dead. Everyone was sure he would have been pleased that he looked so well—his beautiful mustache brushed, his Savile Row suit immaculate, a fresh carnation in his buttonhole, and his English shoes from Peale's, under his spotless spats, boned and rubbed to a fine, soft gleam.

In the same year a dream ended for the Seligmans, too. They had founded, long before the First World War, an orphanage in their native village of Baiersdorf, and had continued to support it. It was a nonsectarian institution, and, indeed, it had always cared for more gentile children than

Jewish. Nonetheless, it was closed. And, in the process, Henry Seligmanstrasse changed its name to Adolph Hitlerstrasse.

“This man,” Otto Kahn once said, “is the enemy of humanity. But he attacks each of us in such an intensely *personal* way.”

- * Schacht was later tried, and acquitted, as a war criminal.

- * Since the war the Warburg bank has been called Brinckmann, Wirtz & Company, but it is the private hope of the Warburgs that the historic name will soon be restored to it.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

As the German Jewish crowd composed itself after the agony of the Second World War, it attempted, without ever so saying, to impose a sort of order on itself, a scheme of values, and a system for dealing with the problems which it had begun to see as inevitable. It was decided, for example, that the proper moment for “telling” a boy that he was Jewish, and therefore “different,” was on the eve of his departure for boarding school. In the drawing room the little conference was called, with Mother, Father, Grandmother, and Grandfather present in, often, a very solemn circle. Thereupon what might be called the Facts of Faith were presented. One young man, raised to consider himself a “free-thinker,” recalls such a moment shortly before he was to leave for Taft, and remembers asking, in awe, “Does that mean that I’m related to people like Albert Einstein, and Otto Kahn, and Robert Moses?” He was told yes, that this was true, but that there were also certain difficulties inherent in being Jewish, and that, somehow or other, these had to be faced and handled. As a result of these revelations, young Jewish boys have often set off for Taft, Middlesex, Hotchkiss, Kent, and Exeter in a high state of nervousness, and, since the teens can be a heartless age, many have encountered the predicted troubles.

James Warburg was only in the seventh grade when he made the unsettling discovery. His parents, Paul and Nina Warburg, had become “twice-a-year Jews,” attending the synagogue only on the Jewish New Year’s Day and the Day of Atonement, and of his parents’ faith young James only knew that “I felt warmly about Grandfather Warburg’s Friday evenings and loved the sound of Hebrew. On the other hand, I was repelled by the proselytizing religiosity of my New York uncle, Jacob Schiff.” At Miss Bovee’s Elementary School in New York, which James attended, it

was the practice for each student to put his initials in the upper corner of each school paper before passing it forward. As Warburg remembers in his autobiography, *The Long Road Home*, “A slightly older boy whom I rather liked used to insert an E between the letters JW with which I initialed my papers until I put a stop to it by signing myself JPW. Apparently the word ‘Jew’ could be a term of opprobrium; and apparently there were some, or perhaps even many, people who disliked Jews and looked down upon them. My mother confirmed that such was indeed the case. She said that because of this a Jewish boy should always be very careful not to push himself forward. This puzzled me. It seemed like accepting some sort of second-class status.”

It goes without saying that a boy brought up in a strict orthodoxy, or even with the emphasis on ritual that Jacob Schiff had recommended, would suffer no such confusion. James Warburg continues, “I gathered the impression from both of my parents that, no matter what other people might feel, to be a Jew was something of which to be proud. Why this should be so remained unclear. Evidently, my parents wanted their son to feel that he had fallen heir to a precious heritage, but neither of them could nor would explain just what remained of this heritage if the Jewish religion were shucked off. It seemed to me that nothing more remained than a disbelief in the divinity of Jesus Christ.”

Faced with these uncertainties, and with parents who—as the joke went in the crowd—were “just a little bit Jewish,” James Warburg reacted the way several of his generation did. He decided that if he was going to be a Jew “and suffer whatever social or other disadvantages this might entail” he would be “a *real* Jew,” like his Grandfather Warburg. He announced at the age of ten that he wished to study Hebrew, to learn Jewish religious history, and to be *bar mitzvah*. He also revealed that he intended to become a rabbi, at which piece of news “My parents were rather surprised—whether pleased or displeased I could not tell.” (One can rather imagine, however.)

That the rabbinate did not gain James Warburg, and that his religious zeal was short-lived, can be blamed on his Uncle Felix, who had, from the beginning, an unfailing instinct for what made an upper-class American. He had made sure that his own children learned all the proper upper-class things—that they played tennis, rode well, and could handle a sailboat. He had made it a tradition for Warburg boys to go to Middlesex, one of the

most socially impeccable New England schools, with a socially impeccable headmaster, Frederick Winsor, whose wife was “a Boston Paine,” and where daily and Sunday chapel—Christian—were compulsory.

Paul Warburg was never certain how he felt about New England boarding schools—so many boys seemed to emerge from them having lost their Jewishness altogether—but Felix insisted that Middlesex was just the thing for the aspiring rabbi, James. Four years later James Warburg graduated from Middlesex not even so much as a twice-a-year Jew; he was, he said, a “Jeffersonian deist.” He added, furthermore, that he was “never aware of the slightest trace of anti-Semitism among the teachers or the boys”—nor was there, of course, any anti-Jeffersonianism.

Other sons of the crowd, however, have encountered anti-Semitism, both subtle and overt, at otherwise fine boys’ schools where “Jew-baiting” continues to be a popular sport. Perhaps the sport persists because the young Jew is so well prepared for it—defensive, edgy, quick at times to sense aspersions where, perhaps, none were intended. But often they *are* intended. At the Hotchkiss School, not too many years ago, the son of one of New York’s most prominent Jewish families, a bright, active, and well-liked boy, was considered a promising sculptor and was given a one-man show. His show included a number of handsome heads molded of soft modeling clay. One morning it was discovered that someone, in the night, had defaced each of the heads by giving it a large Semitic nose. The desecration outraged Headmaster George Van Santvoord, who made it the basis of a stirring chapel sermon. Most interesting was the attitude of the young sculptor himself, who had begged that the matter be forgotten and was so embarrassed at being the subject of a sermon that he became sick to his stomach.

At Williams College, meanwhile, a nephew of Governor Herbert Lehman was taken into the Governor’s fraternity, Phi Gamma Delta, and then politely told that he would be “the last of your family. We can’t take in too many of you, you know.” This young man, however, decided to stay in the fraternity, though since then fraternities themselves have disappeared from the Williams campus.

Though anti-Semitism did not end with Hitler, it has been said that the Second World War did much to eliminate hard feelings between German Jews and the later arrivals from Eastern Europe. “World War II Made One

of American Jewry,” an item in the Jewish press announced not long ago. This, however, is open to some debate. When the oldest daughter of Mrs. John D. Gordan (who is a Goodhart, a Walter, and a great-granddaughter of Mayer Lehman) was considering colleges, she settled upon Barnard, “largely because of the high percentage of Jewish girls.” But when Miss Gordan arrived at Barnard, and revealed her family’s connection with the Lehmans, Goodharts, Walters, and with Temple Emanu-El, “All the other girls,” says her mother, “immediately assumed that she was the worst sort of snob.”

And, in the careless reaches of Fire Island in a recent summer, a situation developed between two neighboring families—let us call them the A’s and the B’s—that split the community for several weeks. It began when Mrs. A’s little boy—call him Billy—appeared outside Mrs. B’s large front window and, for reasons that are uncertain, made unpleasant faces and spat on the glass. Mrs. B, who saw the deed, was incensed. She charged out of her house, seized young Billy, and spanked him so soundly that Billy ran wailing home saying that Mrs. B had “beaten” him. Mrs. A, outraged, went to her telephone and harsh words flew back and forth between the two women. The feud then escalated to the point where both families consulted their lawyers, and the A’s instigated a suit against the B’s for Mrs. B’s abusive treatment of Billy. At the height of the furor, one neighbor remarked half-seriously, “Well, at least nobody can say that anti-Semitism enters into it”—since both the A’s and the B’s were Jewish. “Oh, but you’re entirely wrong!” cried a friend. “That’s what’s at the *heart* of it. Didn’t you know? The A’s are *white* Jews.”

There continues to be that question of class. The old differentiation between the German “uptown” Jew and the Russian of the “Lower East Side” has become a difference between the “quiet, cultivated Wall Street type” and the “noisy, pushy, Seventh Avenue type”—who do not mix any more easily than oil and water. And out of all this has come the impression that Jews “dominate” both these fields in the city.

A *Fortune* survey in 1936, however, looking into the billowing anti-Semitism in both Europe and America, pointed out that the Jewish community had not at all monopolized industry, as was often claimed, though Jews had tended to gravitate toward certain segments of it. There were then, as there continue to be, few Jews in important positions in the

insurance business. Yet the liquor business, which traditionally was the prerogative of Jews in Poland (for one reason because they did not drink), is heavily in Jewish (non-German) hands in the United States, accounting for about half of the distillers. Advertising is essentially a “white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant” business in New York, yet broadcasting, which is so closely allied to it, might be said to be the opposite, since the major networks are headed by Jews. There have been few Jews, if any, in automobile manufacturing, though there are many in dealerships and the car-rental business; there are few in heavy industry, hardly any in transportation or utilities. The magazine remarked on a “tendency to crowd together [and a] pronounced psychological trait: clannishness, tribal inclinations,” and said that the Jewish influence and position were “to be found in those reaches of industry where manufacturer and merchant meet, hence the dominance in retailing.”

The survey took notice of the historical accidents that tended to move Jewish businessmen from one area to another—from the theater into the motion picture industry, from the junk business, which was such an easy start for a penniless immigrant, to the scrap-metal business. The magazine added: “Wherever Jews may be, industrially or culturally or professionally or merely geographically, they are always present in numbers and almost always present as Jews.” But note was also taken that many German Jews, who had got their start in dry goods and the clothing trade—and who had provided employment for many later-arriving Eastern Jews—considered themselves as having “graduated” into banking, and having “turned over” the garment industry to the rude Easterners.

Yet even in finance the Jewish position was limited to certain types of banking. In the 1930’s, of 420 directors of the New York Clearing House, only thirty were Jews. There were practically no Jewish employees in the largest commercial banks, nor are there today. In investment banking Jews occupied a strong but not overwhelming position. Kuhn, Loeb had become the largest Jewish house, followed by the Seligmans, Speyers, Ladenburg-Thalman, and Lehman Brothers, but none of these was as large as the House of Morgan, and, collectively, they were easily outweighed by non-Jewish houses, including Dillon, Read, which might be termed a semi-Jewish house.* In foreign loans, Morgan did 20 percent of the business, followed by the National City Bank and Dillon, Bead, with 12 percent

apiece. In domestic activity, however, Kuhn, Loeb and Morgan were nearly neck and neck—putting the lie, somewhat, to notions of the “international” aspect of Jewish banking. Of 252 members of the New York Stock Exchange, only forty-six were Jewish.

With the creation of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the network of laws controlling the stock market, Wall Street banking lost much of its old raffishness and, to many people’s way of thinking, much of its romance and all its fun. In place of its old free-wheeling excitement—the noise and hubbub, sights and sounds that had first appealed to the early Seligman brothers—Wall Street assumed a new sobriety; the daredevil days were over, and in their place had come a new mood of caution, a new emphasis on conformity and routine. The handshaken agreement—as well as the double-cross—became less popular in an age of adding machines, paperwork, and lawyers. Investment banking and stockbrokerage had become, according to one Wall Street man, “less of a game and more of a business.” At the same time, any essential differences between the operations of the German Jewish bankers, who had once relied heavily on ties of friendship and kinship, and their gentile counterparts began to blur and disappear. And, ironically, as Wall Street, that notorious painted lady, became respectable, the third- and fourth-generation German Jews had, in many cases, turned to more “respectable” operations than banking—to teaching, medicine, law, publishing. Soon there was not a single one of the so-called “Jewish houses” which did not have a number of non-Jewish partners, and only a few today are headed by members of the founding families. Among them are Kuhn, Loeb, whose senior partners today include John M. Schiff and Frederick M. Warburg, both great-grandsons of Solomon Loeb, and Gilbert W. Kahn, Otto Kahn’s son who, through his mother, is a grandson of another founder, Abraham Wolff. Lehman Brothers, too, is headed by Emanuel Lehman’s grandson, Robert Lehman. But others, such as Goldman, Sachs and J. & W. Seligman & Company, have passed “out of the crowd.”

There is one young Jewish house which has demonstrated that much can be accomplished in the old-time way—through a judicious mixture of marriages, sons, mergers, and money. Carl Morris Loeb was born in Frankfurt, the son of a dry-goods merchant, and, in what was becoming a

time-honored way, ran away from the family retailing business as a youth to work as an office boy for one of Germany's leading metal-fabricating firms, Metallgesellschaft. In 1892, when Loeb was seventeen, the firm sent the young man to work in the St. Louis office of its United States subsidiary, the American Metal Company. He had an uncanny "feel" for commodity values, and within three years was manager of the St. Louis office.

At this point, young Loeb came to the attention of American Metal's president, Jacob Langeloth. But even more important, from the standpoint of his future career, was Carl Loeb's choice of a wife. She was Adeline Moses, the daughter of Alfred Huger Moses, the head of one of the most prominent Jewish families in the South.* The Moses family had been merchant bankers in Montgomery, and, though Adeline's father had experienced hard times in the post-Civil War South—which explained his presence in St. Louis in the real-estate business—he had other important qualifications. The original Lehman brothers, Mayer and Emanuel, had been his best friends in Montgomery.

Jacob Langeloth brought Carl Loeb to New York, at the age of thirty, to be a vice president of American Metal, and there—though, as everyone pointed out, they were not "real" Loeb's—Adeline's connection with the Lehman's proved socially helpful. The new Loeb's became fixtures of the German Jewish crowd, and ten years later Carl M. Loeb was president of the American Metal Company. This was his fortunate position when, during World War I, American Metal became separated from its German parent, Metallgesellschaft, and, in one of the shortest success stories on record, Carl Loeb found himself in control of the American company.

Soon however, Carl Loeb was quarreling with his board of directors, who considered their president too dictatorial. In the summer of 1929 Loeb offered his resignation, and it was accepted. Once again, he had chosen, uncannily, the most auspicious moment. Part of the separation agreement was that he sell back some eighty thousand shares of American Metal that he owned at the stock's considerably inflated market price. He did so, and six months later American Metal had dropped 50 percent in the great crash. In 1930 Carl Loeb was out of a job, but very rich.

He was a handsome, imperious man, whose wife never called him anything but a respectful "Mr. Loeb." In New York the couple occupied what has been described as a "His and Hers apartment," a vast affair spread

out across a building so large that their respective bedrooms were exactly a block apart. Mr. Loeb's favorite means of communication throughout this large territory was the handwritten memorandum signed "C.M.L." He liked to entertain opulently, and, before an important dinner party, he liked to stage a full dress rehearsal of the forthcoming dinner one night ahead of the actual affair, complete in every detail including substitute guests who stood in for the guests expected the following night.* Sometimes, as is so often the case in show business, the rehearsals went better than the actual performances—as happened when Loeb entertained a visiting Belgian financier whom he particularly wanted to impress. The dinner was disastrous. Mrs. Loeb had retired to her bedroom afterward, when she heard her husband's footsteps approaching down the long corridor that separated the two apartments. Waiting breathlessly for his angry knock, she saw instead a memorandum slipped beneath her door. It said: "Fire the cook. C.M.L."

Adeline Loeb was the crowd's Mrs. Malaprop, beloved for her slips of the tongue and, at times, what seemed like slips of the entire mind. Meeting Otto Kahn for the first time, she is said to have gushed, "I know your father, the Aga!" When told the story of how Oscar Levant, whose ex-wife married Arthur Loew, had wickedly telephoned the newlyweds on their wedding night to ask, "What's playing at Loew's State?" Mrs. Loeb waited patiently for a punch line and, when none came, asked, "Well, what was?" On another occasion, when one of her sons got into a fight at the Century Country Club and she reproached him, he said, "But Mother, he called me a son of a bitch!" Mrs. Loeb replied, "That's funny. He doesn't even know me."

For a while after his retirement from American Metal, Carl Loeb busied himself as a gentleman of leisure, and he and his wife took a world cruise. But he was a restless, ambitious man, and soon Adeline Loeb was turning to her son John to say, "Do something about your father. I'd do anything to get him out of the house." John Loeb's solution was simple and direct. He suggested to his father that they buy a seat on the New York Stock Exchange. Carl asked his son one question: "Do you think you can run an investment banking house?"

John replied that he thought he could. He had already learned certain lessons from previous generations of bankers in the crowd, and among them

was the importance of marrying well. Just as the Lehmans had secured their position by marrying Goodharts and Lewisohns, so John L. Loeb secured his by marrying a Lehman—the youngest daughter of the Arthur Lehmans, Frances, who is always called “Peter” because, some say, she bore a childhood resemblance to Peter Rabbit. Others say her father, in his Old World way, had always wanted a boy. When John and Peter Loeb were married, it was said that he was an adventurer and had married her for her money, even though the great fortune she *might* have inherited from her grandfather, Adolph Lewisohn, failed to materialize, thanks to the latter’s industrious spending. What she had more than money was social position and, of course, banking connections. One sister was married to Richard Bernhard, a partner at Wertheim & Company. Another married Benjamin Bittenwieser, still one of the most important partners at Kuhn, Loeb.

John Loeb’s new firm opened its doors in January, 1931. Six years later, through a merger with Rhoades & Company, an old gentile firm that needed money, the Loeb’s firm, which needed a prestige name, became Carl M. Loeb, Rhoades & Company. Like his banking predecessors, John Loeb has kept his house tightly “in the family,” employing, among others, his son, John Loeb, Jr., a nephew, Thomas Kempner, and, until his recent death, a son-in-law, Richard Beaty, as Loeb, Rhoades partners. There has never been any doubt, however, about who is in charge. Today, John L. Loeb (the L. stands for Langeloth) heads a firm whose partners decorate the boards of directors of sixty American corporations; which manages investment funds totaling over \$500 million; which has brokerage income alone of \$27 million a year; which has fourteen offices and more than a thousand employees of its own, plus twenty-two correspondent firms in 140 cities in the United States and Canada. The firm’s \$12.5 million in stated capital places it among the top firms in Wall Street. It need hardly be added that John Loeb, since he is married to one, enjoys excellent relations with the still larger and more prestigious House of Lehman.

John Loeb has inherited his father’s astonishing sense of timing. Thanks to antennae around the world that amount to something very like a private CIA, he completed the sale of the firm’s major Cuban sugar holdings the day before Fidel Castro took over. In 1945 the Loeb and Lehman millions received a new infusion of wealth when Clifford W. Michel joined Loeb, Rhoades. Michel was married to the former Barbara Richards, one of the

granddaughters of Jules Bache, and therefore related to the Cahns and the Sheftels and, by marriage at least, to the Lewisohns (to whom the Lehmans, of course, were already related). Another Bache granddaughter was Mrs. F. Warren Pershing, wife of the son of the World War I General, and head of Pershing & Company, a rich brokerage house. Then, in 1953, John Loeb's daughter, Ann, married Edgar Bronfman, elder son of Samuel Bronfman, the founder and chief executive of Distillers Corporation—Seagrams, Ltd., undoubtedly the richest man in Canada and among the wealthiest in the world. Bronfman money is not formally a part of Loeb, Rhoades capital, but one of the firm's partners has said, "He's a kind of partner who is awfully important." (At the Loeb-Bronfman wedding, Mr. Loeb was overheard to say, "Now I know what it feels like to be a poor relation.") The Bronfman millions, however, have joined Loeb-Lehman and Bache holdings to make up the largest single holding of stock in New York's Empire Trust Company, which has assets of some \$300 million. Edgar Bronfman, now in his middle thirties and head of his father's American subsidiary, Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, joined the board of directors of the Empire Trust Company in 1963. The young Bronfmans occupy a New York apartment with its own gymnasium, an air-conditioned estate in Westchester built in the Georgian style, and a 4,480-acre hideaway in Florida called, appropriately, the V.O. Ranch.

At sixty-four, John Loeb, a governor of the New York Stock Exchange, is held in almost dreadful awe in Wall Street. A tall, slender, handsome, and immaculately tailored man with jet-black hair and dark, beetling brows, he looks half his age. In the Salvador Dali portrait of him that hangs in his house in Westchester, an armored knight on horseback prances in the middle distance; one suspects that this romantic dash and flair were what the artist saw in John L. Loeb. He is a firm believer in rigid exercise, which accounts for his youthful looks and splendid physique.

He has been called an overpowering father, and a tough-minded, high-handed, even ruthless businessman. "Whenever I approach Mr. Loeb," says an acquaintance half-seriously, "I automatically begin to say, 'I'm sorry.'" One of Loeb's favorite tactics, when an associate is ushered into his office, is to work busily at some item on his desk for a moment or two, and then look up and inquire, "What time is it?" Recently a visitor was so dismayed by this approach that he replied, "Whatever time you say it is, Mr. Loeb!"

Another habit is to receive petitioners—who come, as a rule, with elaborate presentations explaining why Loeb, Rhoades should help finance their companies—to listen to their arguments patiently, to smile and nod sympathetically as they talk, and then, when they finish, to stand up and say, “No.” “It’s discouraging,” says one man, “because you never know at which point he might have been willing to bargain or negotiate.”

John Loeb believes that a deal, when set, “is set in concrete,” according to a friend. Not long ago, when a major corporation had sought out Loeb, Rhoades for a major underwriting venture, the president of the company at the last moment began demanding further concessions. John Loeb turned abruptly to his partners and, suggesting that their time could be better spent on other matters, led them out of the meeting. The next few hours were tense ones at Loeb, Rhoades, for most members of the firm were certain that they had lost an important account. John Loeb, however, had suspected that the corporation needed Loeb, Rhoades money and, sure enough, the president telephoned later in the day to say that he was ready to sign—on Loeb’s original terms.

Because of his personal power, to say nothing of the vast financial power he now wields, one approaches John Loeb’s special chair under the ormolu chandelier in the Loeb, Rhoades private dining room on tiptoe, always certain of the importance of what one has to say. He has, in other words, the kind of influence and presence that has not been seen on Wall Street since the days of Jacob Schiff.

In many ways, John Loeb is like his friend and contemporary, Robert Lehman, Philip’s son and the present head of Lehman Brothers, who has been called “the last of the imperiously rich men” and “the aristocrat of the autocrats.” Robert Lehman’s power in the money market is as vast as Loeb’s, perhaps even vaster, and the phrase, “Bobby wants to speak to you,” strikes terror in the breast of all at One South William Street. His office in the building is small—many junior partners have larger space—but it gives him a psychological advantage. “When you go into that little office, you really feel crowded out by him,” says one man. He himself, also slight of stature, seems to fill the room.

Lehman, however, in recent years has turned his attention increasingly to his art collection. Started by his father, who bought paintings more for an

investment than out of a love of beauty, the Lehman Collection has been so enormously added to by Robert that it is now the largest, and possibly the finest, private art collection in America. The paintings range from thirteenth-century Italian to twentieth-century French, and include Goya's famous *The Countess of Altamira and Her Daughter*, El Greco's *Saint Jerome as Cardinal*, Botticelli's *Annunciation*, and *The Legend of Saints Eligius and Godeberta* by Petrus Christus, plus literally scores of others that are just as fine. The collection also includes Persian and Chinese ceramics, Renaissance medallions and enamels, and the largest assemblage of medieval aquaemanales (water pitchers) outside Nürnberg. The collection—guided by Robert Lehman's straightforward philosophy, which is, "If I see something I like, I buy it"—hangs in the offices of Lehman Brothers downtown, and also on the walls of Robert Lehman's eighteen-room Park Avenue apartment. But the bulk of it is contained in the late Philip Lehman's town house in Fifty-fourth Street, which his son maintains as a private museum and which outsiders—art scholars only—may see by appointment. Here, heavily guarded, behind gold doors and in rooms covered with deep Persian rugs and hung with gold-fringed red plush, are most of the old masters, the Gothic tapestries, the Renaissance furniture, the Italian majolica, and the other *objets d'art*. Often at night the collector himself visits the house, sometimes with his curator, sometimes alone, and prowls the great, silent rooms like a solitary Croesus contemplating all that he has amassed.

It was once supposed that Robert Lehman, being a banker, would buy art more with an eye to the dollar than with discrimination or taste. There is a concentration, in the collection, on Sienese primitives, which are painted with a great deal of gold leaf, and Lehman's public-relations man, Benjamin Sonnenberg, once commented, "What other kind of paintings would a banker buy than Sienese, with all that gold in them?" At the same time, when some three hundred items from the Lehman Collection were sent for exhibit at the Orangerie of the Louvre in Paris in the summer of 1956, one French critic wrote; "We would like the purchases of our museums to be inspired by a taste as severe as that of which M. Robert Lehman today gives us dazzling evidence." The exhibition was the talk of Paris, waiting lines formed outside the Orangerie, and over seventeen thousand people saw the

show in the first two weeks alone—statistics which gratified the banker in Robert Lehman.

Today Bobby Lehman is seventy-four, and the collection continues to grow. Its total value is now impossible to calculate, and, inheritance taxes being what they are, it is unlikely that Lehman's son or any of his other heirs will be able to maintain the Lehman Collection intact and in the family. The future of the town house in Fifty-fourth Street is uncertain, and the subject of much speculation in the art world. Benjamin Sonnenberg, however, has an answer. He says of his friend and client, "To begin with, Bobby isn't *going* to die. He's firmly convinced he's immortal. And furthermore, if he should turn out to be wrong, being a Lehman he'll figure out some way to take it all with him."

Robert Lehman himself is quite aware that his death and the disposition of his collection are often discussed, and he is able to view his situation with a certain humor. Not long ago he visited the Sterling and Francine Clark Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts, where twin tombs for the museum's founders flank the entrance to the building that houses *their* art collection. Starting up the museum's steps, he paused to gaze solemnly at the marble plaques bearing the names of Mr. and Mrs. Clark. He whispered softly, "What a way to go!"

* Dillon of Dillon, Read was originally named Lapowski before joining the gentile firm of William Read & Company, which grew to prominence in the early 1920's. Though Jewish, as *Fortune* discreetly put it, Mr. Dillon was never "identified" with the Jewish bankers or the Jewish community of New York.

* Through Adeline Moses Loeb, her grandchildren today can trace remote cousinships to such people as Mrs. Randolph Churchill, Mrs. William A. M. Burden, Jr, and the Duchess of Norfolk.

* The substitutes were culled from Loeb's "B-List" of friends. One woman says, "I'd been going to lovely dinners at the Loeb's for years before I discovered that I was one of his guinea pigs—that if I was asked for a Wednesday, the *real* party would be Thursday."

“FAMILIENGEFÜHL” ... AND NO BARE FEET AT DINNER

After Jacob Schiff’s death, Therese Loeb Schiff began to blossom. Under the dominance of her husband, she had always seemed a meek little thing whose most effective form of protest was to burst into tears. Now she began to assert herself. She seemed, of all things, to have a personality. She became, as her husband had been, a person to be reckoned with.

She announced, for one thing, that she had no intention of leaving the big Fifth Avenue house, as her family suggested, and moving to an apartment or, as several widows in the crowd had done, to the Plaza. She would continue to live in the style Jacob Schiff had set, tended to by Joseph, her major-domo. She continued her Tuesdays “at home.” She developed projects for herself. One was her practice of giving each grandson—there were five—a raccoon coat when he entered college. Morti’s son, John Schiff, and Frieda’s son, Paul Warburg, reached college age at the same time. John was accepted at Yale, but Paul failed his exams. John got his coat, but Paul did not. John’s coat was stolen in the middle of his freshman year, whereupon Therese bought him another. This outraged Paul; John had had *two* coats, and he had had none. Therese was adamant, but Paul took his case to Joseph, who, the boys knew, was one of the few people who had any influence over Mrs. Schiff. He got his coat.

Young Paul Warburg was a great deal like his father, Felix—a prankster, a playboy, a charmer. At the age of twelve he was asked, “What did you do today?” and he airily replied, “I had lunch at Mr. and Mrs. Henry Morgenthau’s. Mrs. Morgenthau thinks I’m very well read. We discussed Wells’s *Outline of History* and Strachey’s *Queen Victoria*.” He had read

neither book. He never did go to college. On a summer trip to Paris, after an all-night outing with Jack Straus and two young ladies, Paul wandered back to the Ritz at dawn and, somehow, got into the wrong room. Seeing “something large” on the bed, he flung his black ebony cane at it. It was his mother, who sat up in bed and said with perfect poise, “Your father will speak to you about this in the morning.”

There had been few divorces in the crowd until Paul’s generation. He divorced his first two wives. His brother Gerald divorced his first wife. His cousin Jimmy Warburg divorced *his* first two wives. His cousin Renata divorced her first husband, and his brother Edward married a divorcee. For a while, Paul Warburg worked in the bond department of the International Acceptance Bank. One of his jokes was to say, as he entered the office each day, “Good morning, Mr. Carlton,” to the clerk who adjusted the Western Union ticker tape. (The joke was that Newcomb Carlton was chairman of the board of Western Union.) Once a visiting partner from M. M. Warburg in Germany found the ticker out of order and, remembering Paul’s greeting, picked up the phone and demanded to speak to Mr. Carlton. He was put through to Newcomb Carlton and said, “Get your tools and get right over here. Our ticker’s broken.” Carlton telephoned the bank’s president to say, “There are a lot of things I’ll do for your bank, but I won’t come over and fix your ticker.” Shortly thereafter, Paul Warburg took an office at Carl M. Loeb, Rhoades and, as the family puts it, “began to settle down.”

Paul’s nickname was “Piggy,” and his brother Edward’s was “Peep” or “Peeper.” This was because his old German nurse had said he was like a little *Piepmatz*, or peeping sparrow. (For a while, his brothers called him “Matz,” but Grandmother Schiff objected.) Edward was interested in art, and wanted to teach. He approached Georgianna Goddard King, head of the art department at Bryn Mawr, who said she would like to hire him but had no budget for another instructor. Edward offered to work without pay, but Miss King said no one was permitted to do so. “But if I were to receive a check from some anonymous donor for a thousand dollars, that could go for your salary.” Edward Warburg said, “Shall I write the check now?” Miss King replied, “There’s no hurry.” Edward’s course was a great success, and soon Edward was able to approach Miss King and ask, “Don’t you think I should give myself a raise?” Later, Edward Warburg helped organize the

film library at the Museum of Modern Art and, with Lincoln Kirstein and George Balanchine, launched the School of American Ballet.

On Edward's twenty-first birthday Felix Warburg had written to his son:

For men like you who have to describe—and want to teach—the impressions which works of beauty make or ought to make on people at large, it is unavoidable to ask yourself “How does that strike me?” But otherwise I have found too much feeling of one's pulse a weakening process, and I would rather watch others' reactions and try to be helpful than self-indulgent or, what is the worst quality, self-pitying. Avoid that always—but pity others with all the noblesse oblige that station requires ... remain a gentleman ... and you will make people happy by your company, your sympathy, your understanding. The world is full of beauty and some kindly people—find them and be as happy and as lucky as has been so far your

Old devoted Father

He was an unusual father in that he encouraged each of his sons' enthusiasms, and did not insist that any of them go into banking. Gerald became a cellist of some note, and later formed the Stradivarius Quartet, named for the four instruments his father had collected. Only Frederick became a fourth-generation Kuhn, Loeb partner. But of course Felix himself had begun to say, a little sadly, “I was never born to be a banker. I've buried nine partners, and now end up as the sole survivor of this big firm, with nothing but young people around me.”

In summer all the scattered Warburgs liked to gather at Woodlands in White Plains, where both Felix and Paul had houses, and where the children had been given parcels of property and, in some cases, houses of their own. Felix bought two hundred acres adjacent to Woodlands which he called Meadow Farm, and this became Therese Loeb Schiff's summer home. Even though it belonged to the Warburgs, Meadow Farm was always called “Mrs. Schiff's house,” and she grew quite possessive about it. No one, she announced, was to use her bedroom while she was away—except, she added, “Felix may use it if he wishes.” Even long after Therese's death in 1933 at the age of eighty—on her last Tuesday “at home”—Meadow Farm was still “Mrs. Schiff's house,” and the couple who cared for it would allow no changes, always saying, “Mrs. Schiff liked it this way.”

The house at Meadow Farm was considerably more modest than the huge old place at Woodlands, and, after Felix Warburg's death in 1937, Frieda moved to Meadow Farm for her summers. Here she worked on dispersing items from her husband's estate—the art collection to museums in Washington, Boston, Springfield, Brooklyn, and New York, as well as to Harvard, Vassar, Princeton, New York University, and the David Mannes School of Music. She also busied herself with the Felix and Frieda Schiff Warburg Foundation, which aids a number of Jewish causes as well as the Visiting Nurse Service, the Central Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis, New York University, the Planned Parenthood Federation, the National Urban League, Tuskegee Institute, the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Lewisohn Stadium Concerts and—hard though it may be to believe—a long list of other charities.

After Felix's death, Frieda herself established a separate foundation for settling immigrants in Israel. By 1955 it had built over a thousand homes. In winter Frieda traveled to her house on Eden Road at Palm Beach, where in her twilight years her afternoons were filled with bridge and canasta and visits with old friends. Adele Lewisohn Lehman had a place nearby, and so did the Henry Ittlesons, the Sol Stroocks, and Edithe Neustadt Stralem, whose sister had married Frieda's brother Morti. In all three places—New York, Palm Beach, and Westchester—there were plenty of family around. Still, whenever she had a free moment, Frieda dictated her reminiscences into a recording gadget, as her family had urged her to. “They say I am a link with the past,” she said.

She wrote: “To me, and to all our family, it has always been of the utmost importance to know one's past and to live up to it with pride and a true sense of responsibility.” Her memoirs gently took to task certain members of the family—her brother Morti's branch—who, she felt, did not always “live up to” the past. Of Morti Schiff himself she wrote: “I loved him dearly, even though I might criticize his ‘society’ kind of life, which I knew was a sort of escape for him.”

Of Morti's daughter, the four-times married Dorothy Schiff, publisher of the New York *Post*, Frieda said: “Many of her ventures, matrimonial and otherwise, have left some time-gaps when it was not easy for us to maintain contact. To me, she is disarmingly amusing and charming, even if her enthusiasms at times seem to carry her beyond her depth.... I am always

tremendously amused by her giggly anecdotes and her youthful exuberances concerning the passing scene.” Of Morti’s son, the polo-playing Kuhn, Loeb partner, John Schiff, who married the George F. Baker, Jr.’s’ daughter Edith and who went sailing into the *Social Register*, the Piping Rock Club, the Turf and Field, the Creek, the Grolier, the River, the National Golf Links, the Meadow Brook, the Pilgrims, and the Metropolitan Club of Washington, his aunt commented: “Like his father he has a way of making abrupt, short, assertive statements which sound brusque until the shy grin that follows gives him away. He was brought up in the tradition of the Long Island gentleman, which sometimes comes into amusing conflict with his underlying German-Jewish inheritance.”

Outside the winter house on Eden Road, there nested a pair of cardinals—wintering also—whom Frieda named “Spellman” and “Mrs. Spellman.” Frieda wrote:

I like to think that the birds, like myself, have not only derived warmth from the sun but from the surroundings in which we have found ourselves. It is pleasant to realize that these good things have been and will be a part of my life always.... There have been times when I yearned for the ability to lose myself in deep religious faith, and, although I have observed many of these forms, I must admit that the most meaningful experience to me has been the sense of family (*Familiengefühl*), which has grown and flourished in our household.

Familiengefühl had become the crowd’s most powerful religion. It was why family holidays and anniversaries had become far more important than the Sabbath or the Jewish holy days. For the Seligmans, at one point, there were 243 days out of every calendar year that marked a family anniversary of some sort, and nearly every one of these was given some sort of observance. Lives revolved around family days. Had not young Felix and Frieda Warburg chosen a family birthday—Frederick’s—to move into their new house at 1109 Fifth Avenue? It was *Familiengefühl* that warmed Margaret Seligman Lewisohn’s debut party, held at the Warburgs’ house. Congreve, the Warburgs’ steward-butler, had, as his somewhat unusual hobby, been raising chickens from an incubator in the Warburg basement. It was probably the only chicken hatchery on upper Fifth Avenue, and no one in the family was entirely sure whether it was a good idea. But when

Congreve incorporated his project into the family debut, everyone forgave him. He designed a centerpiece for the party consisting of three-day-old baby chicks “coming out” of a brooder, with a low white picket fence all around it. The chicks chirped all through the party.

Since the family was still the business, a little *Geschäftsgefühl* mixed with the *Familiengefühl* was not inappropriate. And, on the eve of his daughter’s marriage, Felix Warburg could write to his son Gerald to say:

Carola’s wedding presents are coming in, and as she reports to me, business is good. Do not get too fat, because the house will be crowded on the 27th, for with 280 people who insist on seeing Carola married, and about 900 who will come afterward to shake her poor hand off, there will not be any rugs left in the house, and anything that is eatable, drinkable or smokable will disappear very fast. Dr. Magnes will officiate and I am quite sure he will say the right thing at the right time.

For Jacob Schiff’s sixtieth birthday, a huge family party had been held at 1109. A stage and screen were erected in the second-floor music room, and at the height of the evening the lights dimmed and Gerald Warburg, dressed as Mercury, appeared from behind a curtain and pointed dramatically to an enormous photograph of the Rock of Gibraltar that appeared on the screen. The lights dimmed once more and, with a thunderous roll of drums from offstage, a photograph of the twenty-two-story Kuhn, Loeb building was superimposed upon the Rock.

But perhaps the gathering with the most *Familiengefühl* of all was Frieda Schiff Warburg’s own sixtieth-birthday party, planned as a surprise for her by the children and grandchildren. Her sons Frederick and Edward devised a skit which showed that religion *was* the family. It was their version of the Seder ceremony, reinterpreting the Exodus from Egypt. But Egypt, in the Warburg version, was southern Germany, and the Lost Tribes of Israel—Solomon Loeb and his brothers—were given a Baedeker but managed to get themselves even more lost; instead of turning right at the Nile, they turned left and found themselves in Cincinnati. There, Frederick declared, the family’s business was “buying feathers from the Indians and selling them at football games.” Next, Edward gave an illustrated lecture on

Frieda's life, using slides of various works of art to represent its various phases: a hectic cubist painting to show her frame of mind after her morning telephone calls; a plump Lachaise sculpture to show her girth before visiting Elizabeth Arden's Maine Chance Farm, and a Pavlova figure by Malvina Hoffman to show the "new" Frieda Schiff, after Arden. As a finale, her sons delivered a poem they had written for the occasion. It asked a long series of questions about who did what in the Warburg family, and the chanted answer, at the end of each stanza, was: "The boys, the boys."

Frieda and Felix Warburg's only daughter, Carola, has a summer home in Katonah, in upper Westchester, a large, rambling old place at the end of a long, shaded lane, and the house stands on a little rise under huge old trees, surrounded by rolling lawns, a garden, and a tennis court. Carola Warburg is the widow of Walter N. Rothschild—of "the Brooklyn branch," as he used to say, of the European House of Rothschild—head of the Abraham & Straus department store, and a well-known yachtsman who, among other benefactions, presented his fifty-five-foot yawl, the *Avanti*, to the United States Naval Academy and once gave an elephant to the Prospect Park Zoo. Mrs. Rothschild is a tall, handsome, silver-haired woman who nearly always wears blue—"It's the only color I seem to see"—and whose main charitable interests are hospitals and the American Girl Scouts, of which she was national vice president. She is on the boards of Montefiore Hospital, of the Brearley School, of the Ellin Prince Speyer Animal Medical Center—Mrs. Rothschild lives surrounded by dogs—of the Maternity Center, and is active in the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies. When asked, however, if she is a practicing Jew, she answers, "Well, I was married by a rabbi," and one gathers that this is one of the few concessions she has made to her religious heritage. She is, of course, Jacob Schiff's granddaughter, and the great-granddaughter of Solomon Loeb and Fanny Kuhn; her cousins, near and remote, are named Lewisohn and Seligman; in her dining room, amidst some of her own paintings, many of which are of fruit—"I had a fruit period"—hangs the Anders Zorn portrait of Frieda Schiff Warburg, painted in the pink dress she wore the night she first met Felix. One might expect Carola Warburg Rothschild to encapsulate all the values of her forebears. In many ways, she does.

Of her father, she says, “Fizzie taught them all how to do it. They all learned from him. The Schiffs were never strong on humor. The Warburgs were. We had a certain graciousness of living, and a sense of *noblesse oblige*. That’s what we had—and discipline. We had discipline.”

As her mother and grandmother did before her, Mrs. Rothschild spends much of her Katonah summers surrounded by small grandchildren—she has thirteen—who have such names as Peters and Bradford (her three children all married non-Jews). Meals in her dining room are nowhere near as formal as they were in her grandfather’s day, but, of course, they are still served by a white-coated butler, and one day one of the children sat down at the dinner table in his bare feet. “I looked at him,” says Mrs. Rothschild, “and I said, ‘No bare feet at the dinner table.’ He said to me, ‘Is that a rule, Grandma?’ and I said, ‘Well, I hadn’t really thought about it. But yes. It’s a rule.’ He said, ‘Okay, if it’s a rule.’ It’s that simple. If you tell a child it’s a rule, he obeys it. It’s discipline again. That’s what’s been omitted from so many of these young people’s lives—discipline. You can’t give a horse its head without using the rein. You have to rein to be under control. You have to accept rules and limitations in order to cope with things. If you have discipline, then you can always rise to occasions.”

Index

A. T. Stewart & Co., 158, 159, 162, 164
Abraham & Straus, 20, 420
Abraham family, 20
Adams, Henry, 124
Adams, James Truslow, 99
Adirondacks camps, 18, 23, 231
Adler, Cyrus, 180, 192
Adler, Felix, 132, 141, 166
Aldrich, Nelson, 383
Aldrich, Bill, 342*n*.
Alexander, James W., 326–27
Alexander family, 326–27
Alfonso XIII of Spain, 351
Alger, Horatio, 150–51
Alsterufer Warburgs, 211
Altschul, Mrs. Frank, 16–17
Altschul family, 20, 361
Amalgamated Copper Co., 292
American Hebrew, 318, 321
American Jewish Committee, 355, 356, 370
American Metal Co., 407
American Museum of Natural History, 252
American Potash & Chemical Corp., 361
American Smelting & Refining Co., 292, 293, 294
Amherst College, 204–5
Ami, Ben, 319
Amory, Cleveland, 25
Anaconda Copper co., 250
Anderson, Robert, 150

Anglo-American Telegraph Co., 116
Anglo-California National Bank, 133, 137
Anglo-French Commission, 344
anti-Semitism, 16–17, 22, 73, 112, 116, 124, 135, 142–43, 160–65, 177,
204, 210–11, 239, 261–64, 314, 339–40, 349, 355–56, 380, 400, 403–4
Arden, Elizabeth, 419
Arling, Emanie, *see* Philips, Mrs. August
Armstrong Committee, 328
Armstrong-Jones, Antony (Lord Snowden), 382
Arnold, Florine, *see* Seligman, Mrs. Alfred Lincoln
Astor, Jacob, *see* Astor, John Jacob
Astor, John Jacob, 40, 72, 75, 138, 158, 358
Astor, John Jacob, Jr., 75
Astor, Mrs. John Jacob, Jr. (*née* Gibbes), 75
Astor, Mrs. William Waldorf, 118, 124, 382, 295, 326, 330–32, 380–81
Astor family, 74, 75, 100, 103
Atlantic & Pacific Railroad, 127, 128, 129, 186
Atlantic Monthly, 18
August Belmont & Co., 45, 145, 162
“Aztec Land” deal, 186

Bache, J. S., & Co., 20
Bache, Jules, 21, 409
Bache, Mrs. Jules (Florence Sheftel), 21
Bache, Semon, 21
Bache, Mrs. Semon, 273
Bache family, 20, 283
Back, James, 263
Baer, Sophia, *see* Sachs, Mrs. Joseph
Baker, Edith, *see* Schiff, Mrs. John M.
Baker, George F., 223, 309
Baker, George F., Jr., 418
Balanchine, George, 416
Ballin, Albert, 373, 394
Baltimore & Ohio rr, 180, 337
Bank of England, 83

Bank of Manhattan, 384
Bank of North America, 43
Banque de Paris, 253
Bar Harbor, 201–2, 204, 341, 368
Barbizon school of painting, 388
Barnard College, 355, 404
Baron de Hirsch Fund, 320
Barron's, 18
Barsimson, Jacob, 41
Baruch, Bernard, 164, 248, 293
Baruch family, 42
Bath club (London), 261
“Battle of the Giants,” 229, 231
Bayard family, 39
Beaty, Richard, 408
Beauregard, Pierre Gustave, 95
Beebe, Lucius, 77
Beecher, Henry Ward, 163
Beekman family, 39
Beer family, 20, 382
Beit, Eduard, 373
Bellamont, Lord, 43
Belmont, August, 24, 37, 38, 39, 41, 44–45, 72–77, 83, 85, 94, 101, 129, 131, 140–41, 145–47, 152, 155, 158, 159, 177, 189, 220, 261, 331
Belmont, Mrs. August (Caroline Slidell Perry), 75, 77, 146, 282
Belmont, August, Jr., 145, 261
Belmont, Oliver H. P., 145, 261
Belmont, Perry, 145, 261
Belmont family, 75–77
Benjamin, F. A., 115
Benjamin, Judah P., 144
Bernhard, Dorothy Lehman, 10, 398
Bernhard, Richard, 409
Bernhard, Mrs. Richard, 391, 409
Bernhard, Robert A., 10
Bernhard, William L., 10

Bernhard family, [20](#)
Bernheimer, Alva, *see* Gimbel, Mrs. Bernard
Bernheimer, Charles, [43](#)
Bernheimer family, [20](#)
Bertholdi, Auguste, [145](#)
Bethlehem Steel Co., [361n.](#)
Binswanger, Dr., [399](#)
Birmingham, Janet Tillson, [11](#)
Bismarck, Otto von (Prince), [177](#), [210–11](#)
Black Friday, [126](#)
Black Thursday, [229](#)
Bliss, Cornelius N., [263](#)
Bohm, S. H., [115](#), [165](#), [247](#), [251](#)
“Bohunks,” [318](#)
Bond, James, [125n.](#)
Bonn, William, [174–75](#)
Boston Museum of Fine Arts, [278](#)
Bouguereau, William, [76](#)
Boutwell, George Sewall, [118–20](#)
Bovenizer, George W., [354](#)
Brandeis, Louis D., [356](#)
Brandt, Carol, [11](#)
Brautschau, [59](#), [69](#), [91](#), [149](#)
Brearley School, [149](#), [199](#), [420](#)
Bremer, Frederika, [40](#)
Brevoort family, [39](#)
Brinckmann, Wirtz & Co., [397n.](#)
Bristow, Benjamin, [153–54](#)
Bronfman, Edgar, [410](#)
Bronfman, Mrs. Edgar (Ann Loeb), [409–10](#)
Bronfman, Samuel, [410](#)
Brown Brothers, Harriman, Inc., [113n.](#)
Brown, John Crosby, [263](#)
Bryant, William Cullen, [163](#)
Buckingham, James Silk, [40](#)
Budge, Henry, [175](#), [177](#), [309](#)

Budge, Mrs. Henry, 309
Buneau-Varilla, Philippe, 259–61
Burden, Mrs. William A. M., Jr., 407*n*.
Burlington rr, 222–24, 226
Buttenwieser, Benjamin, 409
Buttenwieser, Mrs. Benjamin, 409
Buttenwieser family, 20

Cabot family, 38
Cahn, Emma, *see* Lewisohn, Mrs. Adolph
Cahn, Leopold, 21
Cahn, Mrs. Leopold, 21
Cahn family, 20, 283, 409
Canfield, Cass, 11
Cannon, LeGrand, 262
Cardozo family, 42
Carl M. Loeb, Rhoads & Co., *see* Loeb, Rhoads & Co.
Carlton, Newcomb, 415
Carlyle, Thomas, 220
Caruso, Enrico, 334
Cassel, Ernest, 189, 190–91, 198, 230, 369, 370
Castle Garden, 320
Castro, Fidel, 409
Catchings, Waddill, 364, 385
Central Pacific Railroad, 127, 186–87
Central Park, 100
Century Country Club, 374, 384, 408
Cerutti, Marquise de, 296
Chapman, John Jay, 143
Chase, Salmon P., 89, 90, 91, 117
“Cheeryble Brothers,” 102
Chesapeake & Ohio rr, 180
Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul rr, 180
Chicago & Northwestern Railroad, 179
Chicago-Burlington & Quincy rr, *see* Burlington rr
Choate, Joseph, 262

Churchill, Mrs. Randolph, [407n](#).
Cincinnati, [67–68](#), [69](#)
“Citizenship of Adolph Lewisohn, The,” [389](#)
City Ball, [74](#)
City College of New York, [18](#)
Civil War, [86 ff.](#), [116](#), [153](#)
Clark, Dodge co., [129](#)
Clark, George C., [129](#), [140](#)
Clarkson family, [39](#)
Clemenceau, Georges, [351](#)
Clinton, DeWitt, [150](#)
Cohn, Henry, [117](#)
Collection of Jewish Narratives, [62](#)
Colombia, [260–61](#)
Colorado Smelting & Refining Co., [249](#)
Columbus, Christopher, [41](#)
Colusa mine, [243–44](#)
commercial paper, [104](#)
“Committee of Seventy,” [159](#)
Communism, [324](#)
Comstock Lode, [165](#)
Coney Island, [164](#)
Conned, Heinrich, [333–34](#), [335](#)
Consolidated Edison Co., [111](#)
Content, Rosa, *see* Seligman, Mrs. James
Content, Simon, [23](#)
Content, Mrs. Simon (Angeline), [23](#)
Content family, [22](#), [269](#)
Continental Can Co., [363](#)
copper, [242–45](#), [248](#), [249](#), [291](#), [292](#)
Corbil, Sen., [139](#)
Corbin, Austin, [164](#)
Costa Rica, [255](#)
Coster family, [74](#), [75](#)
cotton, [84](#), [85](#), [92–93](#), [95](#), [102](#)
Crocker-Anglo Bank, [137](#)

Cudahy kidnaping, 295n.
Cullman family, 149, 283

Dali, Salvador, 410
Damrosch, Walter, 208
Davidson, Henry, 293
Davis, Jefferson, 92
Deal Golf Club, 374
Dearborn (Mich.) *Independent*, 380
Debrett, John, 394
Delaware & Hudson rr, 337
De Lesseps, Ferdinand, 253, 254, 255, 259
Delmonico, Lorenzo, 77
Delmonico's restaurant, 40, 45, 74, 159
De Neuflyze, M., 119
Denver & Rio Grande rr, 180
Depression, 386
De Rham, Willie, 17
Deutsch, Felix, 346–47, 348
Deutsch, Mrs. Felix (*née* Kahn), 346
Dewey, Melville L. K., 164
De Witt (butler), 381, 386
Diamond Horseshoe, 332, 334, 339
Dickens, Charles, 69
Dillon, Read co., 405
Distillers Corporation-Seagrams Ltd., 410
divorce, 415
Dodd, W. E., 90
Donizetti, Gaetano, 334
Drew, "Uncle Daniel," 123, 124, 125, 130
Drexel, Morgan co., 143, 156, 162, 253, 355
Dreyfus case, 259, 355
Dreyfus, Mrs. Ludwig (*née* Goldman), 21
Dreyfus, Ludwig, 21
Dreyfus family, 209, 213
dueling, 72–73

Durant, Will, [379–80](#)
Durr, John Wesley, [92](#), [102](#)

E. F. Hutton & Co., [22](#)
East Side Relief Work Committee, [321–22](#)
Edison, Thomas A., [242](#)
Edward VII of England, [309](#), [331](#)
Einstein, Albert, [401](#)
Elberon, N.J., [277](#), [283–90](#), [291](#), [368](#), [369](#), [396](#); *see also* Jersey Shore
Electric Boat Co., [361n](#).
Electric Vehicle Co., [358](#)
Eliot, Charles W., [204](#), [344](#)
Elliott, Marine, [220–21](#)
Empire Trust Co., [410](#)
Enterprise Mfg. Co., [256n](#).
Equitable Life Assurance Society, [325 ff.](#), [332](#)
Erie Railroad, [123](#), [124–25](#), [126](#), [178](#), [188](#), [337](#)
Ethical Culture Society, [166](#)
etiquette, [71–72](#)
Everglades Club, [374](#)

“Family Liquidation Agreement,” [190](#)
Farley, James A., [367](#)
Fatman family, [361](#)
Federal Reserve Board Act, [342n](#).
Federal Reserve System, [383–84](#)
Felix and Frieda Schiff Warburg Foundation, [417](#)
Fessenden, William, [91](#), [117](#)
Field, Cyrus W., [116](#)
Financial & Industrial Corp., [385](#)
Fire Island, [404](#)
First National Bank (NYC), [162](#), [223](#), [309](#), [343](#)
Fischel, Harry, [356](#)
Fish, Hamilton, [118](#)
Fisk, “Jubilee Jim,” [123](#), [124](#), [125](#), [126](#)
Fleming, Ian, [125n](#).

Ford, Henry, Sr., 380
Ford, Henry II, 380
Ford Foundation, 380
Ford Motor Co., 380
Fortune magazine, 366, 404, 405*n*.
“Forty-Eighters,” 144
Foster, William T., 364
“Four Hundred,” 20, 118, 282, 332
Fox, J. Bertram, 386
Frankfurt University, 355
Frelinghuysen-Zavala Treaty, 255
Fremdenliste, Die, 235–36, 238
French Society of Dramatic Writers, 351
Fresh Air Fund, 203
Freud, Sigmund, 278, 372

Gable, Clark, 114
Gage, Lyman, 286
Gallenberg, Betty, *see* Loeb, Mrs. Solomon #2
Garfield, James A., 285
Gasner, Beverley, 10
Gates, John “Bet-a-Million,” 160
Gatling, R. J., 248
Gatti-Casazza, Giulio, 334–35, 337, 338, 339, 346
Geary, Sen., 257
Geiger, Abraham, 174
Geiger, Alfred, 174
General League of Jewish Workers, 317
General Motors Corp., 379–80
George III of England, 47
Gerould, Mireille, 10
Gibbes, Thomas L., 75
Gilbert, C. P. H., 313
“Gilded Age,” 281
Gilroy, Thomas F., 262, 263
Gimbel, Bernard, 23

Gimbel, Mrs. Bernard (Alva Bernheimer), 23
Gimbel family, 23
Gitterman, Henry, 87, 88, 94
Goelet, Peter, 39–41
Goelet family, 39, 41, 75
Goethe, Johann von, 336
gold, 78 ff., 113, 115, 116, 125–26, 143
Gold, Nathan, 124
Goldman, Bertha, *see* Goldman, Mrs. Marcus
Goldman, Henry, 283, 361, 362, 363–64
Goldman, Louise, *see* Sachs, Mrs. Samuel
Goldman, Marcus, 66–67, 103–4, 152, 171, 266, 274, 283, 361
Goldman, Mrs. Marcus (Bertha Goldman), 66–67, 103, 104, 266
Goldman, Rosa, *see* Sachs, Mrs. Julius
Goldman, Sachs & Co., 20, 22, 152–53, 266, 362–65, 380, 385, 406
Goldman, Sachs Trading Corp., 385
Goldman family, 9, 10, 23, 60, 66, 145, 149, 267
Goldschmidt, Solomon, 234
golf, 374–75
Gomez family, 42
Gompers, Sam, 293
Goodenough, Prof., 374
Goodhart, Howard, 374
Goodhart, Philip J., 16, 374
Goodhart, Mrs. Philip J., “Granny” (Hattie Lehman), 15, 17, 20, 23, 374
Goodhart, Sander, 149
Goodhart, Wolf, 90, 149, 163
Goodhart family, 10, 15–16, 20, 361, 382, 404, 408
“Googs,” 246; *see also* Guggenheim family
Gordan, Mrs. John D., 23, 404
Gordan, Phyllis Goodhart, 10
Göring, Hermann, 396
Gottheil, Gustav (Rabbi), 17, 148, 166–67, 317
Gould, Jay, 123–26, 130, 131, 143, 179, 187, 268
Gould family, 124, 269
Graham, Charles H., 247, 248, 250

Grand Union Hotel (Saratoga), 159, 160–65, 204, 284, 348
Grant, Julia, 120
Grant, Ulysses, 58, 79, 81, 91, 93, 94–95, 117, 118, 120–21, 125–26, 129,
132, 134, 138, 153, 155, 159, 256, 257, 285
Grant, Mrs. Ulysses S., 58, 120–21
Grant & Ward, 285*n*.
Granville-Barker, Harley, 221
Great Northern rr, 180, 205, 222, 223, 244
Gregory Consolidated Mining Co., 250–51
Groton school, 203, 204
Guggenex co., 249, 292, 293
Guggenheim, Benjamin, 24, 248, 249, 270, 296, 298, 303
Guggenheim, Mrs. Benjamin (Florette Seligman), 24, 246, 270, 272, 273,
296, 298
Guggenheim, Daniel, 250, 292–93, 294, 299
Guggenheim, Isaac “Old Icicle,” 63–64
Guggenheim, Jakob, 62
Guggenheim, Joseph, 62–63
Guggenheim, M. (Meyer) Robert, 299
Guggenheim, Mrs. M. Robert #4 (Polly), 299; *see also* Logan, Mrs. John A.
Guggenheim, Meyer (son of Isaac), 64, 247–50, 292
Guggenheim, Meyer (son of Simon), 20, 65, 66, 86, 171–72, 295–96
Guggenheim, Mrs. Meyer (son of Simon) (Barbara Meyer), 65, 172, 295
Guggenheim, Murry, 250
Guggenheim, Peggy, 24, 270, 272, 273, 283, 296, 299
Guggenheim, Samuel, 64
Guggenheim, Simon, 64–65, 250, 294
Guggenheim, Mrs. Simon #1, 65
Guggenheim, Mrs. Simon #2 (Rachel Meyer), 65
Guggenheim, Solomon, 250
Guggenheim, William, 248, 249, 296–97, 303, 371
Guggenheim, Mrs. William (Grace Brown Herbert), 297
Guggenheim Brothers, 64, 292–93
Guggenheim Exploration Co., *see* Guggenex
Guggenheim family, 9, 20, 21, 23–24, 60 ff., 171, 246–47, 248, 252, 273,
283–84, 292 ff., 382

Guiterman Brothers, 117
Gulf, Mobile & Northern rr, 180

Haarbleicher, Fanny, *see* Lewisohn, Mrs. Sam #1
Hallgarten, Charles, 21
Hallgarten, Mrs. Charles (*née* Mainzer), 21
Hallgarten, Mrs. Lazarus, 273
Hallgarten & Co., 20, 21, 309
Hallgarten family, 20
Hals, Franz, 231
Hambuchen, Joseph, 398
Hambuchen, Toni, *see* Loeb, Mrs. James
Hamburg (city), 234–36
Hamburg-America Line, 394
Hamilton family, 39, 133
Hammerslough, Augusta, *see* Rosenwald, Mrs. Samuel
Hammerslough, Samuel, 362
Hammerslough, Mrs. Samuel (Emelia), 362
Hammerslough family, 20
Hammerstein, Oscar, 334, 339
Hammonia (ship), 237, 240
Handlin, Oscar, 10, 357
Hanna, Mark, 258
Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad, 171
Harmonie Club, 132, 148, 374
Harper's Magazine, 265
Harper's Weekly, 142
Harriman, E. H. "Ned," 187–89, 190–91, 201, 202, 221 ff., 291, 326, 327, 328, 333, 336
Hart, Julius, 116
Harvard University, 204–5, 206, 277–78, 355
"Haute Banque" group, 119
Hayes, Rutherford B., 159, 256*n*.
Hayes, Mrs. Rutherford B. (Lucy), 256*n*.
Heath, Charles Monroe, 297
Heatherdale Farm, 386

Hebrew Orphan Asylum, 252, 263
Hebrew Standard, 318
Heidelberg, Alfred, 309, 310
Heidelberg, Mrs. Alfred, 309, 310
Heidelberg, Ickelheimer & Co., 21, 309
Heidelberg family, 20
Heine, Heinrich, 210
Heinsheimer, Mr., 227
Hellman, Geoffrey T., 10, 272, 382
Hellman, George S., 303, 304, 381–82
Hellman, Henriette, *see* Seligman, Mrs. Jesse
Hellman, Isaias, 85*n*.
Hellman, Mrs. Isaias (*née* Newgass), 85*n*.
Hellman, Max, 113–14
Hellman, Theodore, 114–15, 166, 288
Hellman, Mrs. Theodore (Frances Seligman), 114, 166–67, 284, 288, 290, 306
Hellman family, 20, 84
Hendricks, Harmon, 42
Hendricks family, 42, 144, 261
Henry Street Settlement, 17
Herbert, Mrs. Grace Brown, *see* Guggenheim, Mrs. William
Herbert, Hilary A., 92, 93
Herbert, Victor, 264
Hertz, Mary, *see* Warburg, Mrs. Aby M.
Heyward, Edward, 73
Heyward, William, 73
Heyward family, 73
Higginson family, 38
Hill, James Jerome, 180, 191, 201, 205, 222, 223 ff., 244, 327, 328
Hilton, Henry (Judge), 158 ff., 263
History of Banking, Men and Ideas, A, 124*n*.
Hitler, Adolf, 16, 177, 364, 372, 384, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399
Hoffman, Malvina, 419
Hotchkiss School, 403
Hottinguer, M., 119

House of Rothschild, *see* Rothschild, House of
House of Seligman, *see* Seligman, House of
Hughes, Charles Evans, 328
Hunter, Margaret, 41
Huntington, Collis P., 130, 263
Hyde, H. B., 325, 326, 329
Hyde, James Hazen, 325 ff., 332

I. D. Walter & Co., 139
Ickelheimer, Isaac, 21
Ickelheimer, Mrs. Isaac (*née* Heidelbach), 21
Ickelheimer family, 20, 21, 151; *see also* Isles family
Illinois Central rr, 180, 188, 189
International Acceptance Bank, 384, 415
“International Set,” 369
Inter-Oceanic Commission, 258
Irving, Henry, 221
Irving, Washington, 40
Isles family, 151
Israel Institute of Technology, 355
Israelite, 147
Ittleson, Henry, 417
Ittleson family, 374
Ivy Lee, 337, 350*n*.

J. & H. Seligman, 58
J. & W. Seligman & Co., 10, 20, 29, 57*n*., 86, 151, 156, 159, 165, 249, 253,
254, 255, 257–59, 260, 261, 272, 275, 379–80, 381, 406; *see also*
Seligman, House of, *and* Seligman, Joseph
J. S. Bache & Co., 21, 283
J. Seligman & Bros., 57
Jackson, Levi, 261*n*.
Jackson family, 38
James, Henry, 331
Jay Cooke & Co., 120, 134
Jay family, 100

Jephthah's Daughter, 319
Jerome, Leonard, 74
Jerome Park Racetrack, 74
Jersey Shore, 18; *see also* Elberon, N.J.
Jewish Encyclopedia, 173
“Jewish Grand Dukes,” 25
Jewish Maternity Hospital, 323
“Jewish *Mayflower*,” 41
Jewish Museum, 315
“Jewish Newport,” 283
Jewish Theological Seminary, 355
Jim Thorpe, Pa., 46*n*.
Johnson, Andrew, 111, 117
Joint Distribution Committee, 357, 370
Jonas, Joseph, 42
Jones, Captain, 80–81
Jones, William B., 312*n*.
Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, 410
Josephthal family, 20
Journet, Marcel, 304–7

Kahn, Bernhard, 399
Kahn, Gilbert W., 406
Kahn, Margaret, 371
Kahn, Maude, *see* Marriott, Mrs. John
Kahn, Otto, 18, 21, 24, 178, 217, 220–22, 224, 231, 329, 330, 332–39, 344
ff., 357, 358, 363–64, 370, 371, 385, 397, 399–400, 401, 406, 408
Kahn, Mrs. Otto (Addie Wolff), 208, 217, 221
Kahn family, 9, 20
Kane, Delancey, 100
Kansas City Southern rr, 180
Katy (Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railway Co.), 128, 129
Keene, Jim, 227
Kempner, Thomas, 409
Kennecott, Braden co., 250
Kennedy, Robert F., 164*n*.

“Kikes,” 318
King, Georgianna Goddard, 415–16
Kirstein, Lincoln, 416
Klein, Roger H., 11
Kleinwort Sons & Co., 152–53
Klingenstein, Lee, 10
Knickerbocker Club, 144, 261, 290
Kohler, Kaufmann (Rabbi), 217, 318
Kuhn, Abraham, 68, 69, 103, 177–78
Kuhn, Mrs. Abraham (*née* Loeb), 68
Kuhn, Eda, *see* Loeb, Mrs. Morris
Kuhn, Fanny, *see* Loeb, Mrs. Solomon #1
Kuhn, Loeb & Co., 20, 21, 22, 24, 68, 69, 103, 171, 177–78, 179, 180, 182, 183, 184, 187, 193–95, 204, 208, 216, 217, 221, 222, 225, 227, 229, 231, 278, 288, 314, 326, 327, 328, 334, 336, 337–38, 343, 344–45, 347, 352, 354, 358, 360, 363, 369, 379, 383, 399, 405, 406, 409, 419
Kuhn family, 20, 67, 68, 277–79

Ladenburg, Adolph, 261, 318
Ladenburg family, 19
Lamar, David, 294
Lane, Thomas, 285
Langeloth, Jacob, 407
Lanier, James, 158
Lapowski, M., 405*n*.
Lashanska, Hulda, 302
Lattimore, Owen, 366
Lauer family, 361
Lawrence family, 38
Lazarus, Emma, 144, 145, 261, 320
Lazarus, Moses, 144, 261
Lazarus family, 42, 144, 261
Lee, Robert E., 90, 93, 94
Lee family, 38
Le Gallienne, Richard, 220
Lehigh University, 35

Lehigh Valley Railroad, 35, 338
Lehmaier, Morris, 56, 58
Lehmaier, Mrs. Morris (Rosalie Seligman), 31, 53, 56, 58–59
Lehman, Arthur, 23, 361, 375, 409
Lehman, Mrs. Arthur (Adele Lewisohn), 361, 375, 417
Lehman, Dorothy, *see* Bernhard, Dorothy Lehman
Lehman, Durr & Co., 92, 102
Lehman, Emanuel, 61, 85, 93, 102–3, 263, 276, 283, 358, 361, 406, 407
Lehman, Mrs. Emanuel (Pauline Sondheim), 85
Lehman, Frances, *see* Loeb, Mrs. John L.
Lehman, Harriet, *see* Lehman, Mrs. Sigmund
Lehman, Hattie, *see* Goodhart, Mrs. Philip J.
Lehman, Henry, 60, 61, 85, 276
Lehman, Herbert H., 16, 25, 92, 358–59, 361, 366–67, 397–98, 403
Lehman, Irving, 25
Lehman, Mayer, 61, 85, 92–93, 102–3, 199, 276, 283, 358, 361*n.*, 375, 407
Lehman, Mrs. Mayer (Babette Newgass), 273
Lehman, Meyer H., 276, 361
Lehman, Newgass & Co., 102
Lehman, Orin, 25
Lehman, Philip, 276, 361, 362, 364, 365, 366, 411, 412
Lehman, Robert, 25, 365, 406, 411–13
Lehman, Sigmund, 276, 283, 361
Lehman, Mrs. Sigmund (Harriet Lehman), 283
Lehman Brothers, 10, 20, 57*n.*, 61, 85, 102, 104, 171, 358, 360–62, 364–65, 366, 379, 405, 406, 409, 411
Lehman Collection, 412
Lehman Corporation, 366
Lehman family, 9, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24–25, 60, 65, 84, 102, 140, 145, 148, 149, 172, 276, 321, 366, 374, 397, 404, 407, 408, 409
Lehmann, Leo, 175, 177
L'Elisir d'Amore, 334
Lemaire, *see* Lehmaier
Le Matin, 259*n.*
Lenox, James, 77
Leopold, Nathan, 22

Levant, Oscar, 408
Levant, Mrs. Oscar, *see* Loew, Mrs. Arthur
Levi, Regine, *see* Seligman, Mrs. Henry
Levi family, 20
Lewisohn, Adele, *see* Lehman, Mrs. Arthur
Lewisohn, Adolph, 10, 18, 233 ff., 242–45, 283, 291–92, 293, 294, 324, 371, 375, 386–90, 409
Lewisohn, Mrs. Adolph (Emma Cahn), 283, 386, 389
Lewisohn, Alice, 319
Lewisohn, Frank, 10
Lewisohn, Irene, 319
Lewisohn, Joan, *see* Simon, Joan Lewisohn
Lewisohn, Julius, 237, 371
Lewisohn, Leonard, 237, 291, 292, 319
Lewisohn, Sam, 233–34, 237–38
Lewisohn, Mrs. Sam #1 (Fanny Haarbleicher), 233, 234, 235
Lewisohn, Mrs. Sam #2 (Julie), 233
Lewisohn, Sam II, 386, 389–90
Lewisohn, Mrs. Sam II (Margaret Seligman), 389, 390, 418
Lewisohn Brothers, 291–92
Lewisohn family, 9, 20, 21, 24, 233 ff., 243–45, 250, 294, 321, 361, 382, 408, 409
Lewisohn Stadium, 18, 388, 417
Liebknecht, Karl, 351
Liebmann, Mrs. Alfred, 302
Lilienthal family, 20, 382
Liliuokalani of Hawaii, 310
Limburg family, 361
Lincoln, Abraham, 85, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 93, 111, 117, 138–39, 362*n*.
Lincoln, Mrs. Abraham (Mary Todd), 138–39, 141
Lincoln, Tad, 138
Lindo family, 42
Literary Digest, 299
Lloyd George, David, 351
Loeb, Ann, *see* Bronfman, Mrs. Edgar
Loeb, Carl Morris, 22, 23, 406–9

Loeb, Mrs. Carl Morris (Adeline Moses), 407–8
Loeb, Gerald, 22
Loeb, Guta, *see* Seligman, Mrs. Isaac Newton
Loeb, Harold, 22
Loeb, James, 181, 277–78, 398–99
Loeb, Mrs. James (Toni Hambuchen), 398
Loeb, John L., 23, 408, 409–11
Loeb, Mrs. John L. “Peter” (Frances Lehman), 23, 408–9
Loeb, John L., Jr., 409
Loeb, Morris, 181, 197, 217, 276–77, 312, 399
Loeb, Mrs. Morris (Eda Kuhn), 217, 277
Loeb, Nina, *see* Warburg, Mrs. Paul
Loeb, Rhoades & Co., 20, 22, 409, 410, 415
Loeb, Richard, 22
Loeb, Rosina, 67
Loeb, Solomon, 22, 24, 67, 68–69, 103, 104, 171, 177–78, 180–84, 193–95, 204, 206, 217, 231–32, 276–77, 278, 279, 284, 321, 406, 419, 420
Loeb, Mrs. Solomon #1 (Fanny Kuhn), 68–69, 181, 197, 420
Loeb, Mrs. Solomon #2 (Betty Gallenberg), 69–70, 103, 171, 172, 180–84, 192, 193, 194, 216, 231–32, 267, 273, 276, 277, 278, 318
Loeb, Therese, *see* Schiff, Mrs. Jacob
Loeb Classical Library, 278
Loeb families, 9, 10, 20, 21, 22, 23–24, 25, 60, 68, 69, 148, 149, 180–84, 200, 276–79
Loew, Arthur, 408
Loew, Mrs. Arthur, 408
Logan, Mrs. John A., 299; *see also* Guggenheim, Mrs. M. Robert #4
Lomask, Milton, 65
Lombroso family, 42
London, Meyer, 356
London *Chronicle*, 75
London *Times*, 347, 350
Lone Voice Publishing Co., 297
Long Island rr, 164
Lopez family, 42
Loree, L. F., 337, 338

Louis, Minnie, 320–21
Low, A. A., 83
Low, Frederick F., 136
Low, Seth, 263, 354
Lowell, Josephine Shaw, 321
Lowell family, 38
Lower East Side, 316, 317–18, 320–24, 354, 355, 370, 404
Lusitania, 347

McAllister, Ward, 100, 101–2, 144, 282, 331
McCarthy, Joseph R., 366–67
McCarthy, Mary, 302
McCormick, Richard C., 156
McCreery, James, 263
McCulloch, Hugh, 111, 117
McKinley, William, 286*n*.
McNamara, Hanna, 296
M. Guggenheim's Sons, 249
M. M. Warburg & Co., 206, 209, 211, 214, 384, 393, 395, 415
Mack, Julian W., 356
Macmillan Co., 396
Macy, R. H. & Co., 20, 82, 171, 260, 360
Maine Chance Farm, 419
Mainzer, Bernard, 21
Mainzer family, 20
Mallet, M., 119
Manhattan Beach Co., 164
Manhattan Opera, 335, 339
Manufacturers Trust Co., 385
Many Lives of Otto Kahn, The, 337*n*.
Margaret, Princess of England, 382
Marine National Bank, 285*n*.
Marriott, John (Sir), 385
Marriott, Mrs. John (Maude Kahn), 371, 385
Marshall, Louis, 356
Matz, Mary Jane, 337*n*.

Mauch Chunk, Pa., [35](#), [46](#), [47](#), [140](#)
May Laws, [317](#)
Melton, James, [19](#)
Memphis, Carthage & Northwestern rr, [130](#)
Messel, Lina, *see* Seligman, Mrs. Isaac
Messel, Oliver (Sir), [382](#)
Metropolitan Museum of Art, [252](#), [417](#)
Metropolitan Opera, [325](#), [331–35](#), [339](#), [346](#), [351](#)
Meyer, Barbara, *see* Guggenheim, Mrs. Meyer (son of Simon)
Meyer, Rachel, *see* Guggenheim, Mrs. Simon (#2)
Meyer family, [283](#)
Miami Beach, [18](#), [374](#)
Michel, Clifford W., [409](#)
Michel, Mrs. Clifford W. (Barbara Richards), [409](#)
mining, [247](#) ff.
Minuit, Peter, [112](#)
Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railway Co., *see* Katy
Missouri Pacific Railroad, [129](#), [130](#), [180](#)
mistresses, [295–96](#)
Mitchell, David L., [10](#)
Mittelweg Warburgs, [211](#)
Monetary Trust Investigation, [342–43](#)
Montagu, Samuel, [206](#)
Montana Copper Co., [243](#)
Montefiore Home, [252](#)
Montefiore Hospital, [17](#), [314](#), [354](#), [353](#), [420](#)
Montgomery, Ala., [60–61](#)
Morgan, House of, [141](#), [156](#), [225](#), [226](#), [380](#), [405](#); *see also* Drexel, Morgan
Co. *and* Morgan, John Pierpont
Morgan, J. S., [131](#)
Morgan, John Pierpont, [130–31](#), [141](#), [143](#), [147](#), [156](#), [176](#), [179](#), [180](#), [186](#),
[187](#), [189](#), [191](#), [201](#), [204](#), [222](#), [223](#), [225](#), [226](#), [227](#), [228–31](#), [248](#), [253](#),
[254](#), [255](#), [309](#), [327](#), [328](#), [343](#), [354](#), [363](#), [379](#), [380](#); *see also* Morgan,
House of
Morgan, John Pierpont, Jr., [385n](#).
Morgan family, [100](#)

Morgenthau, Henry, 333, 356, 415
Morgenthau, Mrs. Henry, 415
Morgenthau family, 20
Morris, Lewis (Col.), 39
Morris, William, 43
Morris, Mrs. Wistar, 67
Morris family, 39, 41, 43, 74, 75, 100, 101, 133
“Morrissania,” 39
Morton, Bliss & Co., 128, 162
Morton, Levi P., 128, 158
Moses, Adeline, *see* Loeb, Mrs. Carl Morris
Moses, Alfred Huger, 407
Moses, Isaac, 43
Moses, Robert, 401
Moses family, 407
Mount Sinai Hospital, 7, 323, 373, 388
Murray Hill, NYC, 83, 103
Murray Hill Hotel, 303–6
Museum of Modern Art, 416, 417
Museum of the City of New York, 373

Napoleon, 30, 67
Nast, Condé, 23
Nast, Natica, *see* Warburg, Mrs. Gerald
Nathan, Benjamin, 42
Nathan, Mrs. Benjamin (*née* Hendricks), 42
Nathan family, 42, 144, 261, 382
National Bank of Commerce, 182
National City Bank (NYC), 224, 309, 343, 405
Neighborhood Playhouse, 319
Netter family, 68
Neustadt, Adele, *see* Schiff, Mrs. Mortimer
Neustadt, Sigmund, 21, 309, 310*n*.
Neustadt, Mrs. Sigmund, 309, 310*n*.
Neustadt family, 20, 21, 151; *see also* Newton family
New Jersey Shore, *see* Elberon

New York Association for the Blind, 17
New York Central Railroad, 123, 130, 179, 337, 359
New York City, 37 ff., 57, 71 ff., 82–83, 144–45, 316
New York Clearing House, 405
New York *Herald*, 39, 72, 91, 254, 334, 339
New York Life ins. co., 327, 328
New York *Morning Advertiser*, 264, 275
New York Mutual Gas Light Co., 111
New York *Post*, 417
New York Railway Co., 158
New York Stock Exchange, 38, 82, 227n., 381, 406, 408, 410
New York Times, 22, 29, 147, 162, 282, 347, 349, 355, 370
New York University, 417
New York *World*, 138, 327, 330
New York Yacht Club, 124, 179
Newbold family, 100
Newgass, Babette, *see* Lehman, Mrs. Mayer
Newgass, Benjamin, 85n., 102
Newport, R.I., 18, 160, 283, 286
Newton family, 151
Niblo's restaurant, 40, 73
Nicaragua canal, 254, 255, 256, 258, 259
Nickel Plate rr, 338
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 346, 363
Norfolk & Western rr, 180
Northern Pacific rr, 187, 191, 222, 223, 224–29, 230, 244, 245, 327, 338
Northern Securities Holding Co., 230

Office of War Information, 366
Ohrbach's store, 138
Old Guard, 23, 24, 99, 171
Old Merchants of New York City, The, 42
“One Hundred,” 20
opera, 331 ff.
Oppenheim, Charlotte, *see* Warburg, Mrs. Moritz
Oppenheim family, 212, 393

Oregon Railroad & Navigation Co., [222](#)
Oregon Short Line rr, [222](#)

Packer, Asa, [35](#), [46](#), [47](#)
Pale of Settlement, [317](#)
Palm Beach, [18](#), [374](#), [400](#), [417](#)
Palmer, Mrs. Potter, [121](#), [132](#), [141](#)
Panama Canal, [253](#) ff.
Panama Railroad, [255](#)
Panamanian Declaration of Independence, [260](#)
Panic of 1837, [35](#), [37](#), [39](#)
Panic of 1857, [83](#)
Panic of 1873, [134](#), [136](#), [142](#), [145](#), [201](#), [250](#), [254](#)
Panic of 1907, [342](#)
Pater, Walter, [220](#)
Patterson, Sen., [255–56](#)
Pavlova, Anna, [419](#)
Payne, Oliver H., [293](#)
Peabody, Endicott, [203–4](#)
Pearson, C. Arthur, [348](#)
Pecora Investigating Committee, [385–86](#)
Penn, William, [68](#)
Pennsylvania Railroad, [177](#), [180](#), [337](#), [359–60](#)
Perkins, George W., [379](#)
Perry, Caroline Slidell, *see* Belmont, Mrs. August
Perry, Matthew Calbraith (Commodore), [75](#), [76](#)
Perry, Oliver Hazard, [75](#)
Perry family, [75](#)
Pershing, F. Warren, [409](#)
Pershing, Mrs. F. Warren, [409](#)
Pershing, John J., [350](#), [409](#)
Pershing & Co., [409](#)
Philips, Mrs. August (Emanie Arling), [10](#), [279](#), [283](#)
Phipps, Henry, [321](#)
Pierce, Andrew, [129](#)
Piping Rock Club, [374](#)

Plotz, Harry, 23
Plotz, Mrs. Harry (Ella Sachs), 23
Poniatowsky, André (Prince), 286–90
“Porkopolis,” 69, 103
Porter, Horace, 262
Portrait of a Father, 390
Potter, Henry C., 263
prejudice, *see* anti-Semitism
Prince, Ellin, *see* Speyer, Mrs. James
pro-Semitism, 143
Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, The, 143, 380
Provident Loan Society, 354
Provisional Zionist Committee, 356
Pujo Committee, 342–43
Puritans, 47
Purmann, Gustav, 386

Racquet Club, 261, 373
railroads, 37, 82–83, 99, 115, 117, 122 ff., 141, 178–80, 185–89, 190–91,
194, 201, 202, 205, 222 ff., 244–45, 327, 337–38
Rankin, Mrs., 52
Rathbone, Basil, 387
Rea, Samuel, 338
Reading, Rufus (Lord), 344–45, 350
Red Cross, 355
Red Damask, 10, 279
Redlich, F., 124n.
Resources of National Socialism ... 393
Revolution of 1905, 317
Rhineland family, 39, 100
Rhoades & Co., 409
Rhoades family, 22
“rich man’s panic,” 342
Richards, Barbara, *see* Michel, Mrs. Clifford W.
Rockefeller, John D., 62, 224, 246–47, 249, 292, 293, 343, 354, 359
Rockefeller, William, 292

Rockefeller, Winthrop, 19
Rodeburg, Moritz, 263
Rodin, François, 329
Rogers, Henry H., 292, 294
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 16, 367
Roosevelt, Isaac, 40
Roosevelt, Theodore, 100, 260, 342, 345
Roosevelt family, 39, 41, 100
Root, Elihu, 262
Rosenwald, Julius, 362
Rosenwald, Samuel, 362
Rosenwald, Mrs. Samuel (Augusta Hammerslough), 362
Rosenwald family, 20
Rothschild, Baron de, 73
Rothschild, Carola Warburg, 10
Rothschild, House of, 37, 39, 45, 73, 83, 90, 94, 131, 152 ff., 394
Rothschild, Lionel, 25, 153–56
Rothschild, Meyer Amschel, 173
Rothschild, Walter N., 420
Rothschild, Mrs. Walter N. (Carola Warburg), 420–21
Rothschild, Wilhelm von (Baron), 156
Rothschild family, 20, 37, 39, 44–45, 72, 73, 94, 173, 209, 290
Rubber Tire Wheel Co., 358
Rubino, Sophie, *see* Speyer, Mrs. Eduard
Russian Jews, 316 ff.
Ryan, Thomas Fortune, 327, 329

S. G. Warburg & Co., Ltd., 10
Sachs, Ella, *see* Plotz, Mrs. Harry
Sachs, Emanie, *see* Philips, Mrs. August
Sachs, Harry, 283, 363
Sachs, Howard, 363
Sachs, Joseph, 66, 152, 266
Sachs, Mrs. Joseph (Sophia Baer), 66, 266
Sachs, Julius, 149, 266, 276
Sachs, Mrs. Julius (Rosa Goldman), 266

Sachs, Paul, 363
Sachs, Samuel, 23, 266, 283, 284, 314, 363–64
Sachs, Mrs. Samuel (Louise Goldman), 266, 364
Sachs, Walter, 266
Sachs, Walter E., 10, 153*n*.
Sachs Collegiate Institute, 149, 199, 203, 266, 276, 277
Sachs family, 9, 10, 20, 23, 60, 66, 266
Saga of American Society, 281
Sage, Mrs. Russell, 321
St. Dunstan's house, 347–48, 351
Saint-Gaudens, Augustus, 199, 369
St. Paul Railway, 222
Samson, Matanya, 210
Samson, Richard (Dr.), 210
Samson, Mrs. Richard (Renata Warburg), 210, 415; *see also* Strauss, Mrs. Walter
San Francisco, 79–83
Santa Fe Railroad, 130, 187
Saratoga, N.Y., 159, 160–62
Saratoga trunk, 160
Sarner, Rabbi, 148
Sarnoff, David (Brig. Gen.), 23
Sarnoff, Robert W., 23
Sarnoff, Mrs. Robert W. (Felicia Warburg), 23
“*Scarlet Woman of Wall Street, The*,” 123, 126
Schacht, Hjalmar, 395
Schermerhorn family, 39
Schiff, David Tevele, 173
Schiff, Dorothy, 384, 417
Schiff, Ernst, 309
Schiff, Frieda, *see* Warburg, Mrs. Felix
Schiff, Herman, 190
Schiff, Jacob, 18, 19, 105, 121, 173–75, 176–80, 183–84, 185, 186–87, 188–89, 190, 192–95, 196 ff., 207 ff., 214, 215, 217–19, 220 ff., 244, 252, 276, 278, 279–80, 282, 284, 288, 291, 308 ff., 320, 321, 322, 323,

326, 328–29, 332, 333, 336, 338*n.*, 341–45, 347, 349, 350, 353–57, 359, 360, 368–71, 375, 385, 389, 402, 411, 414, 419, 420

Schiff, Mrs. Jacob (Therese Loeb), 69, 172, 181, 183–84, 192–93, 196–98, 201, 208, 218, 224, 288, 309, 311, 369, 398, 414–15, 416–17

Schiff, John M., 406, 414–15, 418

Schiff, Mrs. John M. (Edith Baker), 418

Schiff, Ludwig, 190

Schiff, Meir ben Jacob, 173

Schiff, Mortimer “Morti,” 197, 198, 199, 200, 202–6, 207, 209, 218, 223, 278, 310*n.*, 314, 344–45, 347, 363, 368, 369–70, 374, 384–85, 414, 417

Schiff, Mrs. Mortimer (Adele Neustadt), 314, 417

Schiff, Moses, 174

Schiff, Mrs. Moses (Clara), 174, 178, 184

Schiff, Philip, 174

Schiff family, 9, 10, 20, 21, 24, 173, 184, 196 ff., 209, 210*n.*, 226, 341, 358, 420

Schönberg, August, 36–37, 177; *see also* Belmont, August

Schönberg, Simon, 36

Schumann, Robert, 213

Schumann, Mrs. Robert (Clara), 213

Schurz, Carl, 139, 240, 263

Schuyler family, 39

Schwab family, 198

Scoville, Joseph A., 42

Sea Bright, N.J., 201, 202

Sears, Roebuck & Co., 21, 362, 365

Securities and Exchange Commission, 386, 406

Seixas family, 42

Seligman, Abraham (ancestor), 31

Seligman, Abraham (son of David), 31, 53, 56, 57, 84, 91, 94, 108–10, 115, 117, 133, 136, 137, 165, 264

Seligman, Mrs. Abraham (*née* Levi), 84, 406

Seligman, Albert, 251

Seligman, Alfred Lincoln, 150, 275, 303–4

Seligman, Mrs. Alfred Lincoln (Florine Arnold), 250, 303–4

Seligman, Arizona, 46*n.*

Seligman, Babette, *see* Stettheimer, Mrs. Max
Seligman, Charles (Sir), 156*n.*, 382
Seligman, David, 30–31, 32, 33, 34, 48, 53, 150, 381
Seligman, Mrs. David (Fanny Steinhardt), 31–32, 33, 34, 53, 67, 150, 381
Seligman, David II, 134, 275, 284, 288, 381
Seligman, Mrs. David II (Addie Walter), 288, 381; *see also* Seligman, Mrs. Henry
Seligman, David Washington, 150, 283
Seligman, Mrs. David Washington (Sophie Wassermann), 283
Seligman, De Witt, 150, 271, 381
Seligman, Edwin Robert Anderson, 119, 150, 166, 167, 275, 306
Seligman, Emma, *see* Wassermann, Mrs. Edward
Seligman, Eugene, 271
Seligman, Florette, *see* Guggenheim, Mrs. Benjamin
Seligman, Frances, *see* Hellman, Mrs. Theodore
Seligman, George Washington, 150, 166
Seligman, Grace, *see* Stettheimer, Mrs. Eugene
Seligman, Helene, 113, 151
Seligman, Hellman & Co., 115
Seligman, Mrs. Henry (Regine Levi), 84
Seligman, Henry, 31, 53, 58, 79, 81, 84–85, 91, 94, 108, 110, 119, 138–39, 150, 156, 190, 283, 284, 374
Seligman, Mrs. Henry II (Addie Walter), 381, 386; *see also* Seligman, Mrs. David
Seligman, Hermann, 150; *see also* Seligman, Henry
Seligman, House of, 93–95, 104, 122 ff., 153–57, 405; *see also* J. & W. Seligman & Co. *and* Seligman, Joseph
Seligman, Isaac, 31, 53, 56, 87–88, 94, 110, 114, 116, 123, 133, 134, 135–36, 154–55, 157, 190, 250, 261, 382
Seligman, Mrs. Isaac (Lina Messel), 382
Seligman, Isaac Newton, 150, 265, 275, 284, 286, 289, 305, 354
Seligman, Mrs. Isaac Newton (Guta Loeb), 182, 279, 288, 399
Seligman, Isaias, 150; *see also* Seligman, Jesse
Seligman, J. & Bros., *see* J. Seligman & Bros.
Seligman, J. & H., *see* J. & H. Seligman
Seligman, Jacob, 150; *see also* Seligman, James

Seligman, James (grandfather of James II), 31, 47–48, 51–53, 55–56, 57, 84, 91, 94, 122, 136, 150, 166, 260, 264, 269–70

Seligman, James II, 29, 30

Seligman, Mrs. James (Rosa Content), 29, 84, 150, 217, 269–70

Seligman, Jefferson, 271–72, 276, 284, 381–82

Seligman, Mrs. Jefferson (Julia Wormser), 272

Seligman, Jesse, 31, 46*n.*, 49, 52–53, 55–56, 58, 78–82, 84, 91, 94, 117, 136, 147, 150, 159, 250, 251, 252–53, 254, 255, 256–57, 258, 261–64, 267, 275, 283, 284, 286

Seligman, Mrs. Jesse (Henriette Hellman), 84, 113, 210, 251, 262, 267–68, 306

Seligman, Jesse II, 306–7

Seligman, Mrs. Jesse II, 306–7

Seligman, Joseph, 20, 29, 32, 33–35, 37, 43, 46–49, 50–54, 55–59, 61, 67, 78, 79, 83–84, 85, 86–87, 88–92, 93–95, 106, 107–10, 111 ff., 122 ff., 132 ff., 143, 147, 149, 150, 151, 153–54, 155, 156, 158 ff., 178, 185–86, 189–90, 198, 204, 247, 250, 252, 253, 258, 261, 264, 265, 275, 283, 284, 354, 360, 368, 371–72, 389

Seligman, Mrs. Joseph (Babet Steinhardt), 20, 59, 79, 83, 94–95, 106, 120, 128, 137, 138, 150, 166, 269, 283

Seligman, Joseph II, 371–72

Seligman, Mrs. Joseph L., 10

Seligman, Leonore, *see* Wassermann, Mrs. Max

Seligman, Leopold, 31, 53, 56, 57*n.*, 79, 80, 81, 84, 94, 108–10, 150, 190

Seligman, Mrs. Leopold (*née* Levi), 84, 110

Seligman, Lippmann, 150; *see also* Seligman, Leopold

Seligman, Margaret, *see* Lewisohn, Mrs. Sam

Seligman, Rosalie, *see* Lehmaier, Mrs. Morris

Seligman, Sarah, 31, 53, 56, 264

Seligman, Sophie, *see* Walter, Mrs. Moritz

Seligman, Theodore, 262

Seligman, W. & Co., *see* W. Seligman & Co.

Seligman, Washington, 271, 372*n.*

Seligman, William, 31, 47–48, 51, 53, 55–56, 57, 78, 84, 86, 90, 91, 94, 107, 108, 113–14, 119–20, 129, 130, 135–36, 150, 151, 153, 156, 190–91, 261, 283

Seligman, Mrs. William (Regine Wedeles), 84, 136
Seligman, Wolf, 150; *see also* Seligman, William
Seligman & Co., *see* J. & W. Seligman & Co.
Seligman & Stettheimer, 57, 108
Seligman family, 9, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29 ff., 46–49, 50–54, 55–59, 61, 65, 68, 78 ff., 101, 102, 103, 106–10, 140, 145, 148, 150–51, 160–62, 171, 172, 181, 200, 202, 236, 246, 250, 253, 269–70, 275–76, 283, 284, 285–90, 294, 296, 303, 321, 358, 371, 374, 380–82, 400, 418
Seligman Family Register, 270, 382
Seligman Frères, 253
Semitic Museum, 355
Sephardic Jews, 41–44, 101–2, 144, 147–48, 261, 318, 320
Sheftel, Florence, *see* Bache, Mrs. Jules
Sheftel family, 20, 409
Sherman, John, 159
Sherry's restaurant, 208, 326
Silver, 248, 249
Simon, Joan Lewisohn, 10, 391
Sklar, Judith, 11
Skull and Bones society, 261*n*.
Smith, Alfred E., 367
Smith, Stephen E., 164*n*.
Sneath, Richard G., 134–35, 136, 137
Snowden, Lord, *see* Armstrong-Jones, Antony
“social climber,” 143–44
Social Register, 281, 282, 375, 418
Solis family, 42
Solomon, Haym, 43
Sondheim, Pauline, *see* Lehman, Mrs. Emanuel
Sonnenberg, Benjamin, 412
South Pacific Railroad, 127, 128
Southern Pacific Railroad, 180, 263
Spartacus League, 351
Speyer, Eduard Beit von, 373; *see also* Beit, Eduard
Speyer, Eduard Gumpertz, 373
Speyer, Mrs. Eduard Gumpertz (Sophie Rubino), 373

Speyer, James, 261, 301, 354, 373
Speyer, Mrs. James, 373
Speyer, Philip, 373
Speyer, Sophie Rubino, 373
Speyer & Co., 20, 174, 221, 343, 373, 405
Speyer family, 20
Standard Oil Co. (N.J.), 224, 292, 293, 361
Stanford, Leland, 127, 186–87
Statue of Liberty, 144–45
Steinhardt, Babet, *see* Seligman, Mrs. Joseph
Steinhardt, Fanny, *see* Seligman, Mrs. David
Steinhardt, Ignatz, 134–35, 136
Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, 412–13
Stettheimer, Eugene, 283
Stettheimer, Mrs. Eugene (Grace Seligman), 283
Stettheimer, Jacob, 57, 107, 108
Stettheimer, Mrs. Jacob, 107
Stettheimer, Max, 56, 57, 78, 86, 107–8, 110
Stettheimer, Mrs. Max (Babette Seligman), 31, 53, 56–57, 58, 107–8, 110, 136, 264
Stettheimer family, 107–8
Stewart, Alexander T., 158–59, 160
Stillman, James, 188, 224
stock market crash (1929), 384–85
Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 332
Stralem, Casimir, 21
Stralem, Mrs. Casimir (*née* Neustadt), 21
Stralem, Edithe Neustadt, 417
Stralem family, 20, 21, 151, 374
Stralheim family, 151; *see also* Stralem family
Straus, Isidor, 171, 298*n.*, 360
Straus, Mrs. Isidor, 298*n.*
Straus, Jack, 415
Straus, Lazarus, 171
Straus, Oscar S., 263, 342, 356
Straus, R. Peter, 23, 164*n.*

Straus, Mrs. R. Peter (Ellen Sulzberger), 23
Straus family, 9, 20, 23, 25, 82, 361
Strauss, Albert, 380
Strauss, Carol, 210
Strauss, Frederick, 380
Strauss, Walter, 210
Strauss, Mrs. Walter (Renata Warburg Samson), 210
Strong, George Templeton, 99, 104
Stroock, Sol, 417
Stroock family, 374
Studebaker co., 362
Stuyvesant, Peter, 42, 118
Suez Canal, 253, 259
Sulzberger, Ellen, *see* Straus, Mrs. R. Peter
Sunningdale Golf Club, 374
Sutro, Adolph, 165

Taft, William Howard, 337
Taft, Mrs. William Howard, 337
Takahashi, Korekiyo (Baron), 308–9
Takahashi, Wakiko, 311
Tehama House Hotel, 80–81
telephone, 301–3
telephone exchanges, 17
Temple Beth-El, 217
Temple Emanu-El, 17, 30, 54, 103, 132, 147–48, 166, 217, 263, 295, 318, 370, 404
Temple Shearith, Israel, 43, 44, 147
Texas & Pacific rr, 180
Thalman family, 20, 24
Thompson, Richard W., 256–57
Thompson, Sen., 257
Thorpe, Jim, 46*n*.
Tiffany, Charles L., 158
Titanic (ship), 298–99
Tobey, Charles, 366–67

Toscanini, Arturo, [335](#)

Town Topics, [301](#)

Tree, Beerbohm, [220](#)

trust system, [359](#)

Tweed Ring, [159](#), [162](#)

Ulrich, Johann Casper, [62–63](#)

Underwood Corp., [362](#)

Union Club, [74](#), [75](#), [100](#), [144](#), [261](#)

Union League Club, [132](#), [144](#), [179](#), [262](#), [263](#)

Union Pacific Railroad, [127](#), [128](#), [130](#), [180](#), [186–87](#), [188](#), [189](#), [190–91](#), [201](#),
[221](#), [222](#), [223](#), [224](#), [225](#), [229](#), [338](#)

United Hebrew Charities, [252](#), [320](#), [321](#), [323](#)

United Metals Selling Co., [292](#)

United States Steel, [342](#)

University Club, [261](#)

Van Cortlandt family, [39](#)

Van Heukelom, Mrs. (*née* Seligman), [228](#)

Van Norden, Warner, [321](#)

Van Santvoord, George, [403](#)

Vanderbilt, Cornelius, Sr., [112](#)

Vanderbilt, Cornelius “Commodore,” [74](#), [123](#), [130](#), [180](#)

Vanderbilt, William H., [179](#), [228n](#).

Vanderbilt family, [75](#), [100](#), [101](#)

Vanderlip, Frank A., [101](#), [124](#)

Van Renssalaer, Stephen, [40](#)

Van Rensselaer, Mrs. Stephen, [41](#), [44](#)

Van Rensselaer family, [40](#), [41](#), [74](#), [75](#), [101](#)

Van Zandt family, [39](#)

Verplanck family, [39](#)

Villard, Henry, [244](#)

W. Seligman & Co., [57](#)

Wabash rr, [338](#)

Wagner, Richard, [334](#)

Wall, Evander Berry, 160
Wall Street, 20, 22, 38, 47, 122, 145, 258, 265, 334, 342–43, 344, 406
Walter, Addie, *see* Seligman, Mrs. David *and* Seligman, Mrs. Henry
Walter, Moritz, 139
Walter, Mrs. Moritz (Sophie Seligman), 139, 140
Walter, Willie, 19, 23
Walter family, 10, 20, 140, 382, 404
Wanamaker, John, 164, 263
Warburg, Abraham, 210
Warburg, Mrs. Abraham (Sara), 210–12
Warburg, Aby M., 211, 212, 372–73, 383
Warburg, Mrs. Aby M. (Mary Hertz), 212, 373
Warburg, Aby S., 211
Warburg, Benjamin, 210
Warburg, Carola, *see* Rothschild, Mrs. Walter N.
Warburg, Charlotte, 210
Warburg, Dvorah, 210
Warburg, Edward “Peeper,” 313, 393, 415–16, 419
Warburg, Elena, 209
Warburg, Eric, 372, 396–97
Warburg, Eva, 210
Warburg, Felicia, *see* Sarnoff, Mrs. Robert W.
Warburg, Felix M., 18–19, 21, 177, 210, 211, 212–13, 214–19, 220, 221, 229, 302, 312 ff., 323, 328–29, 330, 346, 354, 356, 372, 383, 384, 393, 399, 402–3, 415, 416, 417, 418–19, 420
Warburg, Mrs. Felix M. (Frieda Schiff), 10, 21, 196–97, 198, 199–200, 202, 206, 207–10, 213, 215–16, 217–19, 221, 278, 302, 312, 313–15, 341, 368, 369, 370, 414, 418, 420
Warburg, Francesca, 209
Warburg, Frederick M., 314, 393, 406, 418, 419
Warburg, Fritz M., 211
Warburg, Gabriel, 210
Warburg, Gerald, 23, 393, 415, 419
Warburg, Mrs. Gerald (Natica Nast), 23
Warburg, Gioconda, 209
Warburg, Grossvater, 393–94

Warburg, Ingrid, 210
Warburg, Italo, 210
Warburg, James, 402–3, 415
Warburg, Louise M., 211
Warburg, Max II, 397
Warburg, Max M., 211, 212, 214, 383, 384, 393–96
Warburg, Moritz, 177, 210, 211–12, 213, 214
Warburg, Mrs. Moritz (Charlotte Oppenheim), 177, 211, 213
Warburg, Niva, 210
Warburg, Olga M., 211
Warburg, Oliviero, 209
Warburg, Paul M., 21, 177, 211, 212, 214, 217, 221, 288, 312, 372, 383–85, 393, 399, 402, 414–15, 416
Warburg, Mrs. Paul M. (Nina Loeb), 21, 181, 182, 217, 288, 312, 402
Warburg, Renata, *see* Samson, Mrs. Richard
Warburg, Sidney (pseud.), 393
Warburg, Siegmund, 210, 211
Warburg, Tama, 210
Warburg & Co., 10
Warburg family, 9, 10, 20, 21, 25, 177, 209–13, 214, 221, 321, 341, 348, 358, 372, 374, 420
Warburg Institute, 373
Warburg Plan, 395–96
Ward, Ferdinand, 285*n*.
Ward's Island, 320
Washburne, Elihu B., 117–18, 120
Washington, George,; 118
Wassermann, Edward, 283
Wassermann, Mrs. Edward (Emma Seligman), 283
Wassermann, Max, 283
Wassermann, Mrs. Max (Leonore Seligman), 283
Wassermann, Sophie, *see* Seligman, Mrs. David Washington
Wassermann family, 382
Watts, Thomas Hill, 92, 93
Webb family, 75, 100
Wecter, Dixon, 124, 281–82

Wedeles, Regine, *see* Seligman, Mrs. William
Weinberg, Sidney, 365, 380
Wells, H. G., 220
Wells, Linton, 89–90
Wells Fargo-Nevada Bank, 85*n*.
Wertheim & Co., 20, 391, 409
Wertheim family, 20
Westchester County, 18, 100, 291, 386, 410, 417
Western Maryland rr, 338
Western Union Co., 202
Wharton, Edith, 76, 146
White, Carl J., 10
Whitney, William C., 293, 294
Who's Who, 297, 373
Widener, P. A. B., 358
Wilhelm I of Germany, 67, 267, 349–50, 373, 394, 395
William Guggenheim: The Story of an Adventurous Career, 297
William Read & Co., 405*n*.
Williams, Gatenby, 297; *see also* Guggenheim, William
Williams College, 358–59, 403
Willing family, 39, 133
Wilson, Edmund, 290
Wilson, Woodrow, 349, 384
Windsor Hotel, 268–69
Window, Lanier & Co., 253
Winsor, Frederick, 403
Winthrop family, 75
Wolff, Abraham, 21, 197, 208, 217, 221, 263, 406
Wolff, Addie, *see* Kahn, Mrs. Otto
Wolff, Viola, 17
Wolff family, 20, 68, 278
Woolworth, F. W. co., 363
Wormser, Julia, *see* Seligman, Mrs. Jefferson
Worthington Pump & Machinery Corp., 360–61
Wright, J. Hood, 255–56

Yiddish language, [319](#)

Yiddishe Gazette, [322](#)

Young, Genevieve, [11](#)

YMHA, [207](#), [355](#)

YWHA, [207](#)

Zedakah, [321](#), [353–54](#)

Zinsser family, [149](#)

Zola, Emile, [216](#)

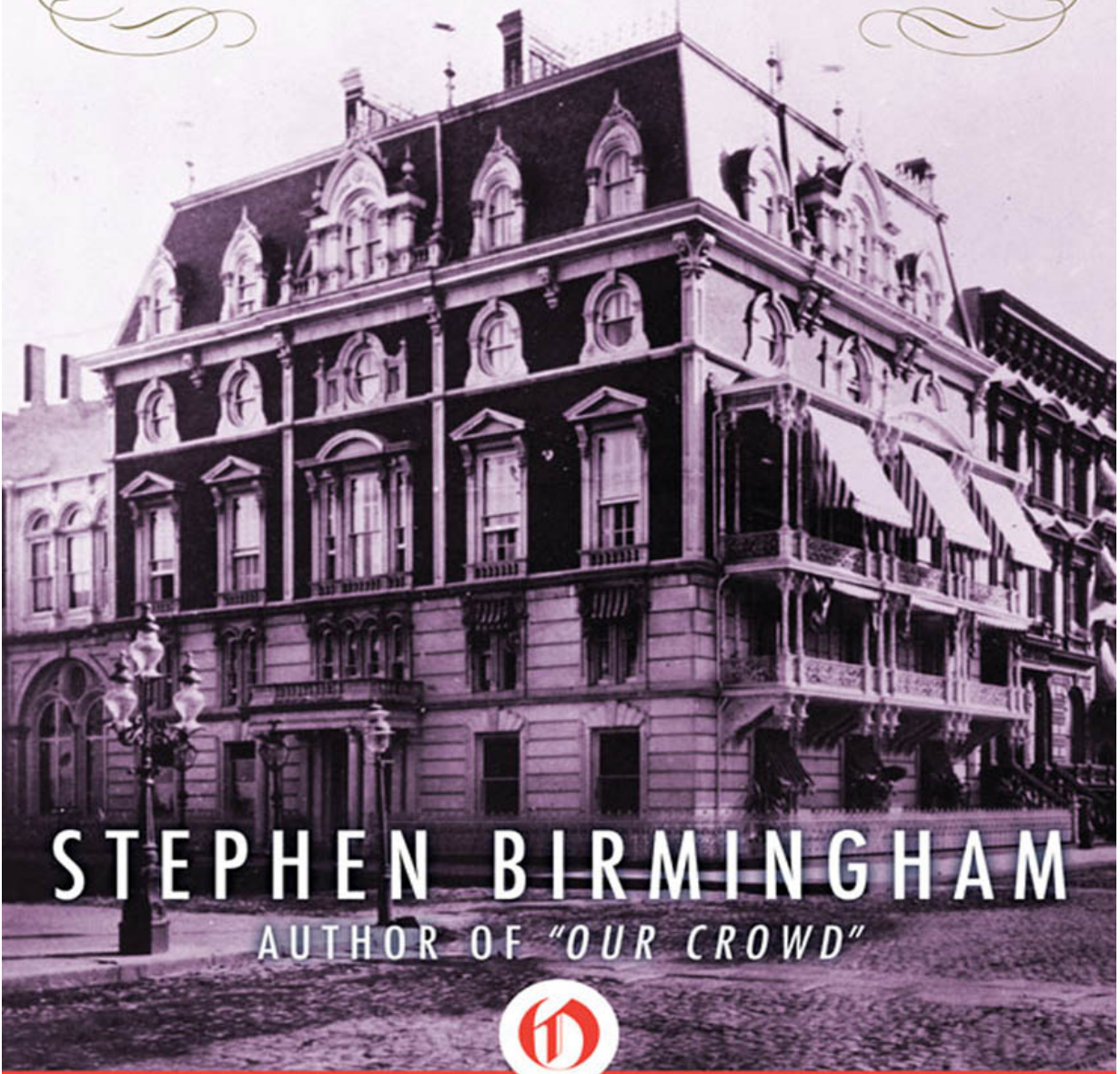
Zorn, Anders, [208](#), [420](#)

Zweig, Stefan, [357](#)

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

THE GRANDEES

America's Sephardic Elite



STEPHEN BIRMINGHAM

AUTHOR OF "OUR CROWD"



The Grandees

America's Sephardic Elite

Stephen Birmingham



For Roger H. Klein, in Memory

Contents

Author's Note

1 The Book

2 Who Are They?

3 "Not Jewels, But Jews ..."

4 The Twenty-Three

5 "These Godless Rascals"

6 Little Victories

7 "Gomez, the Onions Begin to Smell!"

8 "Make Your Way to the Windward Coast of Africa"

9 Allarums and Ravages

10 Misalliances and Misunderstandings

11 First Ladies

12 Legends and Legacies

13 The Firebrand

14 The New Jews Versus the Old

15 The U.S. Navy Surrenders at Last!

16 The Jewish Episcopalians

17 "Nathans Don't Cheat"—But Do They Kill?

18 "Cardozos Don't Cry"

19 The Embattled Sisters

20 "Foul Deeds"

21 "An Altogether Different Sort"

22 Small Gestures ... and a Hush at Chatham Square

[Image Gallery](#)

[Sources](#)

[Index](#)

Sephardim:

“... Many sufferings, which they had endured for the sake of their faith, had made them more than usually self-conscious; they considered themselves a superior class—the nobility of Jewry.”

—*The Jewish Encyclopedia*

AUTHOR'S NOTE

There are a number of people whom I would like to thank for their gracious and generous help to me in the gathering of information for, and preparation of, this book. I am particularly indebted to Mrs. Lafayette A. Goldstone of New York, who turned over her large—and very comfortable—library to me, as a temporary office, where I was able to study her collection of Sephardic Judaica. I am also indebted to Mrs. Goldstone's son, Mr. Harmon Hendricks Goldstone, who was also helpful with anecdotes, family documents and reminiscences, as well as a vast amount of genealogical detail. Thanks are also due to Mrs. Henry S. Hendricks, and her sister, Miss Emily Nathan, for insights into the Hendricks-Nathan-Seixas-Solis family complex, and for access to the Hendricks Collection of family papers. In this connection, I am also deeply grateful to Dr. James J. Heslin and his staff at the New-York Historical Society for their courteous assistance.

For their help and suggestions, I am also grateful to Mr. Piza Mendes, Mrs. Leonard J. Wolf, Mr. and Mrs. Frederic S. Nathan, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd P. Phillips, all of New York, and to Dr. Solomon Gaon of London, Mr. Edouard Roditi of Paris, Mr. Ralph A. Franco of Montgomery, Alabama, and the late Mr. Thomas J. Tobias of Charleston, South Carolina. Rabbi Herbert C. Dobrinsky of Yeshiva University deserves a special word of thanks, as do Dr. Jacob Marcus, Director of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Mr. Victor Tarry of New York's Shearith Israel Congregation, and Mrs. Peter Bolhouse of the Newport Historical Society.

I would also like to add a personal note of thanks to my fellow writers and friends, Geoffrey T. Hellman and James Yaffe, who both took time to offer useful suggestions and to point me in rewarding directions.

It was Mr. John L. Loeb, Jr., of New York who first called my attention to Dr. Malcolm Stern's extraordinary book, which became in a sense the

cornerstone of my book. I am also particularly grateful to Mrs. Godfrey S. Rockefeller for reminiscences and documents pertaining to the Gratz family, and to Dr. Frank A. Seixas for information about the Seixas family. I would also, at this point, like to thank once again my friend and agent, Carol Brandt, who guided the project from the start, and Miss Genevieve Young of Harper & Row, whose editorial taste is as faultless as her eye is finicky. I would also like to thank the librarian and staff of the Rye Free Reading Room, for letting me keep books long after their due dates, thus adding gentle encouragement to the project; and I want to thank Dr. Rachel Dalven for scholarly assistance, Sra. Elena Zayas of Rye, who translated a number of letters from the old Spanish, and Mrs. Mildred Dicker of New York, who typed the manuscript in record time.

While all these people were an enormous help to me, and while the book could not have been written without them, I alone must stand accountable for any of the book's errors or shortcomings.

S. B.

I

THE BOOK

In 1960, there appeared what must have been one of the least heralded books in the history of American publishing. It was called *Americans of Jewish Descent*, and was put together—not “written” exactly—by a scholarly New Yorker named Malcolm H. Stern. The book consisted almost entirely of genealogical charts, and represented a labor of mindboggling proportions.

Americans of Jewish Descent weighs close to ten pounds and is beautifully bound and printed on heavy, expensive stock. It is just over three hundred pages long, including an elaborate index, and traces the ancestry of some 25,000 American Jewish individuals back into the eighteenth, seventeenth, and even the sixteenth centuries, under family headings that list everyone from the Aarons to the Zuntzes. It was never intended to be a best seller; a limited first edition of just 550 numbered copies was printed. Nonetheless, though unheralded, unacclaimed by the critics, and unnoticed by the vast majority of the American reading public, the book created an immediate and profound stir among a small group of American Jews who had long considered themselves an elite, the nobility of Jewry, with the longest, richest, most romantic history: the Sephardim. They were the *oldest* American Jewish families, and they traced themselves back to the arrival of what has been called the “Jewish Mayflower,” in 1654, and even farther back to medieval Spain and Portugal, where they lived as princes of the land. Despite its price—forty dollars—and its size, the book was soon gracing the coffee tables and bookshelves of some of the most elegant and prestigious houses in the country and a second printing

was ordered. The book was suddenly *The Book*, and was being studied for the tiny errors that appeared, almost inevitably, in a volume of this one's size and scope—three centuries of interconnected family trees.

The Book created no stir at all among Sephardic Jews who lived not at elegant or prestigious addresses but in Sephardic communities in such places as Cedarhurst, Long Island, and The Bronx. These Sephardim had no Jewish Mayflower to trace back to, no ancestors who had fought in the American Revolution. They had arrived in the United States, under quite different circumstances and after a quite different history, during the first three decades of the twentieth century and as refugees from the fires of revolutions in Turkey, the Balkans, and Asia Minor. They had spent the first generation of their emigration struggling to emerge from the ghetto of New York's Lower East Side. Had they had access to Malcolm Stern's book, it would merely have confirmed the impression among these Sephardim that the *old* Sephardim were the ultimate snobs, who treated all Jews of lesser vintage with condescension, aloofness, and utter disdain. *Americans of Jewish Descent* includes only those Americans descended from Jews who arrived in the United States before 1840. All who arrived since are thereby automatically excluded from the vellum pages and, as it were, the club.

What Dr. Stern had done, intentionally or not, was to compose a curious combination of a Jewish *Who's Who* and *Social Register*—fatter than the former, much harder to get into than the latter. The Book immediately emphasized a distinction which everyone knew existed but which most people preferred not to talk about, between the old, established Jewish families and the Johnny-come-lately arrivals, the distinguished upper crust and the brash parvenus. With its 1840 cutoff date, Dr. Stern's book eliminates, as he explains in a preface, "the large migration of German Jews in the 1840's, which achieved its greatest impetus following the European revolutions of 1848." Dr. Stern says that this date is "arbitrary," but it isn't really, because it eliminates those Jews to whom the Sephardim consider themselves specifically and emphatically superior. These are the "upstarts"—Kuhns, Loebes, Schiffs, Warburgs, Lehmans, Guggenheims, and their like—who achieved such importance in banking and commerce in the latter part of the nineteenth century; who, by the sheer force of their money, grew to dominate the American Jewish community; and whom the older-

established Sephardim therefore looked down upon and actively resented. The Germans have been not only upstarts but usurpers.

Though he does not make a point of this, the 1840 cutoff also makes it possible for Dr. Stern himself to slip under the wire and into the privileged pages. He descends from one Jacob Stern, who emigrated to Newark in 1837—from Germany, of all places.

With the publication of Dr. Stern's book, small nuances of Jewish social position were reversed overnight. In New York, for example, there had always been a difference in social weight between the two unrelated Loeb families who headed two rival banking houses—Kuhn, Loeb & Company and Loeb, Rhoades & Company. The former were considered “old Loeb,” and the latter “new Loeb” (they were sometimes labeled “real Loeb” and “*not* real Loeb”), since one family had arrived perhaps thirty years earlier than the other. Dr. Stern's book, however, sensationally revealed that the new Loeb were actually older than the old ones, by virtue of a grandmother who was descended from an old, genteel, if slightly impoverished, southern family named Moses. This didn't make the Loeb Sephardim exactly, but it got them in *The Book*, and the old “old” Loeb were not admitted. The banker John L. Loeb, of the new “old” Loeb, promptly bought a number of copies of *The Book* and sent them to friends—including quite a few Christians whom, in his researches, Dr. Stern had discovered to be of Jewish descent. To a few of the latter Dr. Stern's book must have come as something of a shock.

Who would expect, for example, to find the Rockefellers in *The Book*? They are there, along with such old-family members of American society as the DeLanceys, the Livingstons, the Goodwins, the Stevensons, the Ingersolls, the Lodges, the Ten Eycks, the Tiffanys, the Van Rensselaers, the Hopkins, and the Baltimore McBlairs.

The Book made it clear that there were also two kinds of Lazaruses—the old and the new. The old, who include the poet Emma Lazarus, and who for many years were among the very few Jews who summered splendidly in Newport, are prominently in *The Book*. The new, who include the wealthy owners of Federated Department Stores, are not. Similarly, though the name Levy is now a common Jewish name in America, there are certain Sephardic Levys who stem from an extremely old family. One of the first Jews to set foot on American soil was one of these Levys; they went into

fur trading, banking, and government service, and had nothing to do with making rye bread.

Barnaby Conrad, the author, was startled to find his name in *The Book*. His family, socially prominent in San Francisco, had always boasted of its descent from Martha Custis, whose second marriage was to George Washington. Yet one of Conrad's many-times-great grandfathers was one of those early Levys. Discovering this, Mr. Conrad had his genealogy Xeroxed and mailed to several of his family-proud relatives. His mother's comment was: "At least we were *good* Jews."

In New York society, a rumor had long existed that the Vanderbilts were Jewish. Dr. Stern's book was no sooner out than it was confirmed that some of them indeed were. Mrs. William A. M. Burden, whose husband had recently been appointed U.S. ambassador to Belgium by President Eisenhower, was in *The Book*. Mr. Burden's mother was the former Florence Vanderbilt Twombly, and of course the Burdens were members of a long list of New York clubs that traditionally have been closed to Jews, including the Brook, the Links, the Racquet and Tennis, and the River. Once again, it was those Levys at work high up in Mrs. Burden's family tree. In 1779, it seemed, Abigail Levy married a Dr. Lyde Goodwin. Was Dr. Goodwin also Jewish? Perhaps, because for some reason one of his sons, Charles Ridgely Goodwin, changed his name to Charles Goodwin Ridgely. He married a Livingston; their daughter married a Schott; their daughter married another Schott; and *their* daughter married a Partridge, Mrs. Burden's father. When this was pointed out to her, and that Jewishness is said, by tradition, to descend from the distaff side of a union—as it would appear to do in her case—Mrs. Burden said politely, "Thank you very much for telling me."

Americans of Jewish Descent is, in a sense, a cross-reference to *The Social Register*, since whenever names listed in *Americans* are also listed in the *Register*, this fact is noted. But *Americans* contains information that is a good deal more personal and gossipy, and states its facts with much more bluntness, than its non-Jewish counterpart. For example, spinsters are pointedly labeled "Unmarried," and as deaths have occurred not only the fact but the manner of death is indicated. Next to the name of the deceased one can find such notations as "Drowned," "Suicide," or "Murdered." As listees in *The Book* have become baptized, this has been noted, but

sometimes the information provided is quite arbitrary. Next to the name of Rebecca Franks, for instance, in addition to her dates—"B. 1760, Philadelphia, D. Mar. 1823, Bath, England"—and her marriage to Sir Henry Johnson is the cryptic comment "Meschianza," which turns out merely to refer to a large party that Miss Franks attended during the American Revolution. Some of Dr. Stern's remarks seem to verge on the libelous. The word "Insane" appears after a number of names. Again in the Franks family, he notes that Caiman Solomons was "in bad repute with Jacob Franks," who was his uncle but obviously some family father figure. Referring to Caiman's brother Moses (a bad strain in the Franks family here, quite obviously), *Americans of Jewish Descent* advises that he died "in Charleston, S.C. Debtor's Prison, 1745." Dr. Stern also makes, or appears to make, social value judgments such as when, in the case of DeWitt Clinton Judah, he notes that Mr. Judah was married, but omits the wife's name with this comment: "An Irish cook."

The Book shows that the earliest generations of Sephardim in America were astonishingly prolific, with twelve, fifteen, and even twenty children to a marriage. When Ziporah Levy Hendricks died in 1832, she had fifteen children and no less than seventy grandchildren. Remembering family birthdays was no problem because one occurred nearly every week. Frances Nathan Wolff had, in the Hart-Seixas-Nathan-Hendricks family complex, ninety-nine first cousins. Gershom Mendes Seixas, born in New York in 1746, one of a modest brood of eight children, eventually fathered sixteen of his own. His younger brother, Benjamin, not to be outdone, had twenty-one. As a result, today there are thousands who can claim some degree of kinship to one or more Seixases.

From the very beginning, a tight pattern of intramural marriages was formed. Today the intermarriages between members of the Jewish first families present a dizzyingly labyrinthine design. Amelia Lazarus, for example, nee Tobias, had six brothers and sisters, no less than four of whom married Hendrickses. One brother married a Hendricks first then, for his second wife, he chose another Tobias. The Hendrickses, meanwhile, were every bit as loyal. Uriah Hendricks, whose first wife was a Gomez, and whose second was a Lopez, had ten children, two of whom married Gomezes. In the next generation, the thirteen children of Harmon Hendricks married, among others, two Tobias sisters, two Tobias brothers, a Gomez

first cousin, and two Nathans. And consider the descendants of Abraham de Lucena, one of the earliest arrivals. In the first American generation of the distaff side—his daughter married a Gomez—there were three Gomez-Hendricks marriages; in the next, there were four Hendricks-Tobias unions, two Hendricks-Nathan marriages, two Gomez-Dreyfous marriages, and one Gomez-Nathan marriage. Meanwhile, Gomezes were marrying other Gomezes, and a disturbing pattern of insanity—clear from Dr. Stern’s book—that began to appear did not seem to discourage these close unions.

A measure of the intricacy of the interrelationships may be grasped by considering that the 25,000 individuals listed in Malcolm Stern’s book are all grouped under a little more than two hundred family dynasties. It is no exaggeration to say that, today, all the descendants of the early Jewish families are, in some way, related to one another. The late Lafayette Goldstone, a retired New York architect, was so fascinated with his Sephardic wife’s elaborate ancestry that, suspecting that she was indeed related to everybody else, he attempted to plot all the American Sephardim on one large, all-encompassing chart. Years, and hundreds of charts, later, he was forced to admit that the tightly inter-knotted families had presented him with a task that could not be executed.

Dr. Stern’s book also reveals how, through the long corridor of years, the Sephardic Jewish community in America—from the tight-knit, proud entity it once was—has steadily lost members as Sephardim have turned from Judaism to Christianity. The Book shows that prior to 1840 more than 15 percent of the marriages recorded were between Jews and Christians, and that of the total number of mixed marriages only 8 percent involved the conversion of the non-Jew to Judaism; members of only another 5 percent showed any indication of wishing to remain identified as Jews, or as members of the Jewish community. At the same time, as the years pass, and the Sephardic family trees stretch their branches downward into the present, one begins to see another phenomenon. The old Sephardic names with their Spanish and Portuguese musicality—Lopez, Mendes, Mendola, de Sola, de Silva, de Fonseca, Peixotto, Solis—begin gradually to be replaced by the somewhat harsher-sounding Ashkenazic, or German, names, as the old Iberian families feel the influx of the Germans throughout the nineteenth century, as the Sephardim and Ashkenazim intermarry and the Germans—as the Sephardim complain—try to “dominate” with their stiff-necked ways.

But the processes of Germanization and Christianization have by no means been complete. The old Sephardic families continue to compose a tight-knit, proud, and aristocratic elite who know who is “one of us” and who is not; who see each other at weddings, coming-out parties, and funerals; and who worship, with their own particular variations in the orthodox Jewish service, at the Spanish and Portuguese synagogues such as New York’s Shearith Israel, the oldest in the United States. They lead lives of wealth, exclusivity, privacy, a privacy so deep and so complete that few people remember that they still exist—which is just what the Sephardim prefer, for the Sephardim have by nature been shy, reticent, the opposite of showy.

WHO ARE THEY?

How much each person knows and understands about the past is one of the great preoccupations of the Sephardim everywhere. With some, it is a hobby; with others, an obsession. This is very Jewish. After all, the concept of *zekhut avot*, or ancestral merit, is said to provide the spiritual capital of the Jewish people. In this is embodied the idea that the past must be correctly interpreted in order that it can be passed on to enrich future generations. But there are also strong overtones here of a belief in predestination—that meritorious ancestors offer a kind of guarantee that their descendants will be meritorious also.

When one is dealing with hundreds of years of family history, and when family history relates to political and religious history, confusions and contradictions are bound to arise. And when family histories interconnect and tangle in such a variety of ways as they do within the Sephardic community, and as they have done for centuries, there are bound to be jealousies and rivalries and no small amount of bickering. This makes the Sephardic community a lively place. Where everyone professes to be an expert on the past, and where everyone wants to claim the best ancestors—and where there are many claimants for the same people—everyone must be on his toes.

Take New York's Nathan family. The Nathans are indirectly descended from Abraham de Lucena, one of the first Jews to set foot on American soil in 1655, and, in the process of their long history in this country, the Nathans are now "connected," if not directly related, to all the other old families—the Seixases, the Gomezes, the Hendrickses, the de Silvas, the Solises, and

Philadelphia's distinguished Solis-Cohens. Like Massachusetts Adamases, Nathans have managed to produce men of stature in almost every generation. These have included such figures as the late New York State Justice Edgar J. Nathan, Jr., who was also Manhattan borough president under Mayor La Guardia, and United States Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Nathan Cardozo, and—looking further back—Rabbi Gershom Mendes Seixas, called “the patriot rabbi,” who was the spiritual leader of Shearith Israel during the American Revolution. During the war, he closed his synagogue in New York and moved the congregation to Philadelphia rather than ask his flock to pray for George III. Later, he assisted at George Washington's inauguration. His niece, Sarah, married a cousin, Mendes Seixas Nathan, a banker who was one of the little group who gathered one day under a buttonwood tree in lower Manhattan to draw up the constitution of the New York Stock Exchange. Annie Nathan Meyer, the founder of Barnard College, who was a granddaughter of Isaac Mendes Seixas Nathan, once wrote: “Looking back on it, it seems to me that this intense pride, accompanied by a strong sense of *noblesse oblige* among the Sephardim was the nearest approach to royalty in the United States. The Nathan family possessed this distinguishing trait to a high degree.” As a child, she recalled, the subject of cheating at school came up. She never forgot her mother's clipped comment: “Nathans don't cheat.”

Nathans are also proud to assert that “Nathans have never been poor.” The first Nathan arrived in New York with a comfortable amount of money given him by his father, a prosperous merchant in England. So it has been for as far back as Nathans can trace their lineage, which, according to some members of the family, is a long way indeed. Once a Nathan was asked: “Is it true that your family traces itself to King Solomon?” The reply was: “At the time of the Crucifixion, it was said so.”

Today, nearly two thousand years later, there are still prominent and active Nathans. Emily de Silva Solis Nathan is an attractive, Spanish-looking woman with an oval face and olive skin, and an air of quiet cultivation and scholarly efficiency. She heads a New York public relations firm which represents such distinguished clients as Washington's Smithsonian Institution. Her brother was Justice Nathan, a cousin was Justice Cardozo (the family law firm was Cardozo & Nathan), and another cousin was Emma Lazarus, who wrote, among others, the poem (“Give me

your tired, your poor,/Your huddled masses ...”) that is engraved on the base of the Statue of Liberty. A nephew, Frederic Solis Nathan, also a well-known New York lawyer, is first assistant corporation counsel to Mayor Lindsay. Nathan men, quite clearly, favor the law. Emily Nathan lives in a large, airy apartment filled with antiques and the quiet feel of “old money,” overlooking Central Park. A few blocks to the north, she can see the handsome colonnaded façade of Shearith Israel, which her ancestors helped found.

Emily Nathan’s growing-up years were properly private schooled, governessed, servant tended. The Nathans were a large and—rather typically of the Sephardim, who tend to feel most comfortable when in each other’s company—extremely close family. With the Nathan children and their parents in the big old brownstone in West Seventy-fifth Street lived not only a grandmother, Mrs. David Hays Solis (whose maiden name had also been Nathan), but also a maiden aunt, Miss Elvira Nathan Solis. Aunt Ellie, as she was called, was a sweet-faced, blue-eyed, fragile-looking lady who dressed with spinsterly restraint and always smelled of sachet. The children loved the smell of Aunt Ellie’s closets and played hide-and-seek there among the neatly hung rows of dresses. Aunt Ellie was of indeterminate age, either older or younger than her sister, the children’s mother—they never knew. Age was a taboo subject in the Nathan household; the children were told it was bad form to ask people how old they were and, as Emily Nathan says, “There were no drivers’ licenses in those days.” (Not even Dr. Stern was able to uncover Aunt Ellie’s birth date for his book.)

Aunt Ellie was a great favorite of the children. In the evenings, while the children were being given early supper, she would often leave the adult company in the drawing room to join the children in the dining room and tell them stories. They were tales of Revolutionary heroes and heroines—of brave soldiers who plotted to blow up British ships in New York Harbor, of a woman who slipped through enemy lines to carry food to Revolutionary troops, of a sailor imprisoned at Dartmoor during the War of 1812 who later rose to occupy the highest rank in the United States Navy, though he started as a cabin boy sleeping on a folded sail. Aunt Ellie’s stories were rich with the smell of gunsmoke, the slash of cutlasses, colored red with blood spilled in patriotism’s great cause.

In those days, the Nathan family portraits were arrayed in the paneled dining room of the Nathan brownstone, where the children ate, and only gradually did Emily Nathan begin to relate Aunt Ellie's stories—"which at first seemed to me to be nothing more than wonderful eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fairy tales"—to the faces on the dining room walls.

"Was that a relative?" Emily Nathan would ask in the middle of one of the stories.

"Yes, we are connected," Aunt Ellie would reply.

The sense of history, and the sense of a certain long continuity between family past and family present, gradually began to give the little girl a sense of pride and a sense of security. "Later on," Emily Nathan says today, "when certain things happened to me as a Jew that might have upset some people—when I encountered prejudice, for instance, or heard of acts of bias and anti-Semitism—I was able to view them with a certain understanding. Things that would bother other people didn't bother me because I knew, thanks to Aunt Ellie's stories, where I fit into the scheme of things. I was able to rise to occasions."

Gradually, as Emily Nathan grew up, the dining room portraits seemed to grow until they loomed not only over the big room but over the entire Nathan family. Implacable, with, for the most part, stern and unsmiling faces, the old pictures seemed to dominate the Nathans' lives, reminding them daily of what it was to be a Nathan. Some of the ancestors, Aunt Ellie reminded the children, had not always been on the best of terms with one another. One of Aunt Ellie's whimsical little jokes was to say, at breakfast, looking up at the portraits: "I see your great-great-grandfather has a black eye this morning. He's been quarreling again with your cousin Seixas."

For years the Nathan children, and eventually the grandchildren, clamored for more of Aunt Ellie's stories. She seemed to have an endless supply, and could hold them spellbound for hours. Backward and backward she went, back into the Middle Ages, back into Moorish courtyards that dripped with bougainvillea and the splash of stone fountains. For now she was telling of Nathans who had flourished in Spain and Portugal during the centuries of Moorish rule, and of Nathans who had struggled to survive after the Catholic Reconquest. There were Nathans who had seen their synagogues desecrated, who had stood trial for "Judaizing" before Inquisitional courts in the *plazas mayores* of Seville and Toledo during the

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, who had gone to the stake proudly rather than relinquish their faith. There were other Nathans who had pretended to accept Christianity, continuing to worship as Jews in secret places, and there were others who had escaped—some to Holland, some to England, whence the earliest American Nathan emigrated in 1773.

The children liked Aunt Ellie's Spanish stories best, for they were more colorful, peopled as they were with beautiful ladies wearing tall combs and mantillas, royal courts with armored knights in swords, horse-drawn chariots pulled through the night on desperate missions, dukes and princes sighing for maidens' hands. She also told of doubloons being buried by moonlight in a garden, of men thrown into dungeons to be forgotten for years, only to make brilliant escapes; of a man warned by cryptic messages from his king that the Inquisition was at hand; of another whose servants were able to smuggle him to the safety of his ship by hiding him in a sack of laundry. On and on Aunt Ellie's stories went, weaving a vast, rich tapestry of gold and royal purple threads, heroic in size and wonder, spanning more than a thousand years of time, filling the minds of the little Nathans with visions of, quite literally, castles in Spain.

"Yes, we are connected," Aunt Ellie would assure them. "We are connected."

When Emily Nathan's parents died, the family portraits were divided between Emily and her sister, Rosalie. Today half the collection (many of which are very old and precious) hangs in Emily's apartment, and half is in that of Rosalie, who is now Mrs. Henry S. Hendricks. Like her sister's, Mrs. Hendricks' apartment overlooks the park (it is in one of New York's "great" apartment buildings, on Central Park West), and it is similarly filled with antiques and family treasures in porcelain, old books, and heavy antique silver. Mrs. Hendricks is very much a grande dame in New York's Sephardic community. There are even some who would insist that she is *the* grande dame. Rosalie Nathan Hendricks not only has her Nathan heritage working for her, but she is also a Hendricks—by marriage as well as by virtue of the fact that several of her own cousins are Hendrickses—and the Hendrickses are every bit as grand a family, if not even grander, than the Nathans. The Hendricks family—in Spain the name was Henriques—founded the first metal concern in America, a copper-rolling mill in New Jersey which processed copper that was mined around Newark. The

Hendrickses sold copper to both Paul Revere and Robert Fulton, and became America's earliest millionaires, in fact, before there was such a word.

Not long ago, Mrs. Hendricks (who has two daughters), realized that the name, with her husband's death, has died out in the male line. In order that the Hendrickses and their works on this earth should not be forgotten entirely, Mrs. Hendricks gathered together a collection of Hendricks family account books, ledgers, business and personal letters, many written in the Spanish cursive script, and other memorabilia that had been collected for over two hundred years, and presented everything to the New-York Historical Society. The Hendricks Collection is an astonishing one, consisting of more than 17,000 manuscripts and dating as far back as 1758, and at the time of her gift there was considerable comment in the press. Who were the Hendrickses? everyone wanted to know. The name didn't seem to ring any sort of bell. Reporters rushed to the New York Public Library. No Hendrickses are listed in the central file, and they are in neither the *Dictionary of American Biography* nor its predecessors, the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* and *Appletons' Cyclopaedia of American Biography*.

This, it turns out, is exactly how the Hendrickses have preferred it to be. "The Hendrickses never liked personal publicity," says Mrs. Hendricks, a compact lady in her seventies. "Some people just *say* they don't like publicity. We *meant* it. We considered publicity a preoccupation of commonplace people. We were quiet people who did what had to be done in a quiet way. We left publicity to the lightweights."

When Mrs. Hendricks was gathering together her vast gift—it occupies two dozen file boxes—a number of her relatives, and other members of the Sephardic community, expressed the opinion that the papers should rightly go to the American Jewish Historical Society. But Mrs. Hendricks, a determined woman who, one suspects, does not spend much time on opinions that run counter to her own (when she enters receptions or synagogue functions, the way parts before her like the waters of the Red Sea), was adamant. The recipient should be the New-York Historical Society. "I thought they belonged here, in the general community, since we are an old New York family," Mrs. Hendricks says.

Mr. Piza Mendes, a smooth-faced man past seventy who looks at least twenty years younger (he has not a trace of gray hair), does not think Mrs. Hendricks knows much about Sephardic history, and does not hesitate to say so. Mrs. Hendricks, meanwhile, thinks little of Mr. Piza Mendes' historical theories. Though the two are distantly connected (via the pre-Revolutionary Rabbi Gershom Mendes Seixas), grew up together, and see each other often at the same parties and committee meetings, they are nearly always politely but firmly at loggerheads. Anyone about to discuss the Sephardic past is warned by Mrs. Hendricks to "Watch out for Piza!" Mr. Mendes, meanwhile, says airily, "Rosalie doesn't usually know what she's talking about." It has been this way for years. Mr. Mendes, comfortably off, keeps a midtown office where he manages the affairs of his estate, and spends his spare time studying Sephardica.

People like Mrs. Henry Hendricks feel that Mr. Piza Mendes spends entirely too much time trying to elevate the memory of his father, the late Reverend Henry Pereira Mendes, who for nearly half a century, from 1877 to 1920, was rabbi of the Shearith Israel congregation. Mr. Mendes, the feeling is, is trying to raise his father to a kind of sainthood, a position inappropriate to a religion that does not have saints. Certainly no man reveres his father more and, in this regard, Mr. Mendes offers an elaborately illuminated chart of his father's ancestry. This family tree, less dispassionate than those of Dr. Stern, concentrates mostly on ancestors who achieved positions of merit or heroism. One grandfather, for example, David Aaron de Sola of Amsterdam, is noted to have been a "voluminous scholar." But a closer scrutiny of the Mendes family tree reveals—in a kind of capsule history, as it were—the story of the Sephardim, where they came from, and what they endured. The earliest Mendes ancestor uncovered was Baruch ben Isaac Ibn Daud de Sola, who lived in the ninth century in the Spanish kingdom of Navarre, then a desolate region whose rise to prominence and power was still more than a hundred years away. In the next generation, however, we find Michael Ibn Daud de Sola, who has moved to the southern city of Seville, a great Moorish capital, where he has achieved the title of "physician." From here on, in Mr. Piza Mendes' family tree, we can watch the de Sola ancestors rise to positions of prominence in Moorish Spain. One ancestor was a "scholarly Hebrew author," and another was a "rabbi and Hebrew poet." At last, in the late thirteenth century, we

see a de Sola given the ennobling “Don.” He was Don Bartolomé de Sola, and was given his title by Alexander IV of Aragon.

For several generations, all goes well with the de Solas. (One was “Rabbi of Spain.”) Then, in Granada, in 1492, we see that Isaac de Sola was “banished,” and “fled to Portugal.” Through the long Inquisitional years, the de Solas vanish from record, and we imagine them wandering across the face of Europe, from city to city, trying to find a place to put down roots. In the sixteenth century, a de Sola turns up in Amsterdam. But, in the meantime, some de Solas must have remained in Portugal, somehow able—helped by pretending to convert to Christianity—to escape the Inquisitors, because, as late as 1749, we see Aaron de Sola, born in Portugal, escaping to London, where he “threw off his Marrano name,” the Christian alias he had used to keep his pursuers at bay. That same year his son also fled from Lisbon, but he chose to go to Amsterdam. From here on, in both Amsterdam and London, and eventually New York, we see the de Sola family regathering its strength down to Eliza de Sola, who married Abraham Pereira Mendes II, father of the rabbi whom Mr. Piza Mendes reveres so much.

Meanwhile, on the Mendes side of the family tree, there were equally colorful figures. There was Dona Gracia Mendes, for example, a great beauty who was known in Portugal by her Christian alias, Lady Beatrice de Luna. When her wealthy husband died, she went—still as Lady Beatrice—to Antwerp, where, with her looks and money, she became a great social figure. She lived in a palace and gave great balls to which all the titles of Belgium including the king vied for invitations. She also proved herself to be a shrewd businesswoman and, trading her husband’s fortune on the Antwerp bourse, she vastly increased it. At a masked ball a hooded stranger in a black cape whispered to her, “Are you a secret Jewess?”—an unpopular thing to be in Belgium at that time. It was warning enough to Lady Beatrice, who withdrew her money the next morning from her Antwerp banks and went to Amsterdam, where an enclave of well-placed Sephardim was rapidly gathering. Here it was safe to resume her real name of Dona Gracia Mendes, and she did so—and prospered in the Dutch stock market.

Mr. Piza Mendes credits his father with helping to found New York’s Montefiore Hospital; he was also influential in the establishment of the New York Guild for the Jewish Blind, whose annual fund-raising ball has

become the most fashionable event in the city's upper-crust Jewish life. Perhaps his most significant deed was choosing his successor, the beloved Dr. David de Sola Pool, who was also Shearith Israel's rabbi for almost half a century. Rabbi Mendes spotted the young scholar, who happened also to be a relative, when he was a student at Heidelberg.

Dr. Pool, who is now rabbi emeritus, has himself been deeply interested in the Sephardic past, and he is the author of two massive volumes: *An Old Faith in the New World*, a history of the American Sephardim, and *Portraits Etched in Stone*, a series of biographical sketches of the Sephardic Jews who repose in America's oldest Jewish cemetery, in New York's Chatham Square. Dr. Pool, now in his eighties, has an oval, high-foreheaded, serenely contemplative face and a white beard. It has been said that when he passes through the synagogue he looks like the figure of God Himself.

"Dr. Pool wouldn't like me to say this, but he is a Christ-like figure," says Lloyd Peixotto Phillips, a member of Shearith Israel, with a twinkle in his eye. Mr. Phillips is a bustling, vigorous, outgoing man who is a trader on the New York Stock Exchange. Today he has a few outside customers, but he busies himself primarily with his own portfolio—on the telephone all day, buying and selling stocks in considerable quantity and, one gathers, with considerable success; the Phillipses have an East Side apartment, a country home in New Jersey, and a winter place in Palm Beach. One would not expect a man like Lloyd Phillips—who gives the impression of being all business—of caring much about his Sephardic family past. But he does. He has shelf after shelf of old books, family papers, and family trees, showing how the Phillips family started out in eighteenth-century Newport, and how his mother's family, the Peixottos, trace themselves back to Portugal, and an escape into Holland and the Dutch West Indies. In the process of their evolution, both the Phillips and Peixotto families became variously connected by marriage to the other old families, and the names Gomez, Hendricks, Seixas, Nathan, Hays, and Hart all turn up in a multitiered Peixotto-Phillips family tree. Mr. Phillips likes nothing better of an evening than, over a glass of Scotch, perusing the old family documents, diaries, newspaper clippings yellowed with age, letters, scraps and bits of family history.

All this leaves his pretty, non-Sephardic wife, Bernice, whom he calls Timmie, somewhat at a loss. "I never realized any of this," she said with a

little laugh not long ago. “When we were married, and I was having informal cards printed up, I was at Tiffany’s and realized I didn’t even know how to spell Peixotto. I couldn’t understand how that could get to be a Jewish name.” Mrs. Phillips shrugged a little self-effacingly, smiled again, and said, “We were French Jews, you see, and they—well, the French Jews never amounted to all that much.”

“NOT JEWELS, BUT JEWS ...”

The Spanish-Portuguese part of their collective past is of enduring importance to the Sephardim of America. It is what gives these old families their feeling of relevance, of significance, of knowing where they “fit into the scheme of things,” as Emily Nathan puts it. This is because, in both Spain and Portugal in the years before they were forced to flee, the Jews—as a people, a race—had been able to reach heights of achievement unlike anything that had happened elsewhere in their long history. Their position was unique in the world. Who, after all, were the passengers of the *Mayflower*? “Ragtag and bobtail,” Aunt Ellie used to say with a sniff. On the other hand, the first Jews who arrived in America, in 1654, were members of ancient noble families, people of consequence, men and women of property and learning who, for reasons over which they had no control, found themselves on the opposite side of the Atlantic from where they had intended to be. It is also true that, had it not been for their Spanish heritage and experience, the Sephardim would never have found themselves in America at all. And it is interesting to speculate why—considering the vast disparities of time, of place, of culture—the Jews can be said to have found their greatest successes and their fullest freedoms within the context of the two civilizations of modern America and medieval Spain.

The word *Sephardim* stems from Sepharad, the land where the Hebrew wanderers are said to have settled after Jerusalem was captured by the Babylonians and their Temple was destroyed. Generally—though the truth is lost in myth and mystery—the Sepharad is thought to have been a region in Asia Minor. The Book of Obadiah is tantalizingly vague: “And the

captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaanites, even unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south.” Over the centuries, however, Jewish tradition—a relentless and often illogical force of its own—has associated the Sepharad with another peninsula, thousands of miles to the west, the Iberian. It has even been suggested that the Spanish and Portuguese Jews, who have for so long considered themselves the grandest of the grand, simply appropriated the Sepharad for their own. They said it was Spain and Portugal, and therefore it *was*.

Spanish-sounding names do not necessarily indicate Sephardic Jews, though they sometimes do. (The singer Eydie Gorme is a Sephardic Jew, though not of a “first cabin” family.) Spanish and Portuguese Jewish ancestors can often be spied under various disguises of nomenclature. The name Alport, for instance, was in some cases formerly Alporto, meaning “from Portugal,” and the same is also true of such names as Alpert, Rappaport (which itself is spelled a variety of ways), and even Portnoy.

The Seixas family, who do have a Spanish-sounding name, offer an example of what can happen to Jewish names. After escaping from Spain during the Inquisition, some of the Seixases made their way to what is now Germany, where the name became Germanized to Sachs, Saks, and even made its royal way into the Saxe-Coburg-Gotha complex. Meanwhile, some Seixases remained in Spain as secret Jews, while others became honest converts—or so we are to suppose, since there is no way now of testing their sincerity—to Catholicism, and actually aided the Inquisitional courts against their own kin and former brethren. Today, Jewish Seixases and Catholic Seixases may be excused, when they come in contact, for eyeing each other a trifle warily. (Vic Seixas, the tennis player, has resisted efforts from New York’s Seixas and Nathan families to draw a connection with him; he has not answered their letters. The Seixases slyly point out that Dr. Stern’s book lists a certain Victor Montefiore Seixas in the nineteenth century—so the name Victor was in the family even then.) “Not all Seixases are real Seixases,” Aunt Ellie used to say. On the other hand, she was not above mentioning certain prominent Catholic families—in both the United States and Europe—and reminding the children, “We are connected with them also.”

José Fernández Amador de los Rios, the Spanish historian, would have agreed with Aunt Ellie's appraisal of her family. He has said: "It would be impossible to open the history of the Iberian Peninsula, whether civil, political, scientific or literary, without meeting on every page with some memorable fact or name relating to the Hebraic nation." Even that is an understatement. For six hundred years—from roughly the eighth through the thirteenth centuries—the Jews *were* Spanish history.

There had been Jews on the Iberian Peninsula since pre-Christian times. There is a tradition that Jews founded the city of Toledo, the name of which, scholars say, derives from the Hebrew *toledot*, meaning "generations." During the Dark Ages following the fall of the Roman Empire, Spain consisted of a shifting collection of primitive Visigothic city-states, governed by a multitude of undistinguished kings, each of whom had his tiny region which he tried to control, and was usually battling for power against local nobles and bishops of the Church, sometimes winning bloodily, sometimes being overthrown. The condition of the Jew depended on the whim of the king, who either persecuted the Jew or used him in the tradition of the "court Jew"—as a financial middleman through whom money passed in its endless journey from the pockets of the peasant class into the vaults of the royal exchequer. Taxes on Jews were quaint, arbitrary, and capricious rather than confiscatory. In Portugal under Sancho II, for example, Jews were required for a while to pay a "fleet tax," and had by law to "furnish an anchor and a new cable for every ship fitted out by the Crown." In one of the many Spanish kingdoms, the Jews were taxed on such basic foods as meat, bread, and water. In another, there was a Jewish "hearth tax," and in another there was a "coronation tax" plus a regular yearly tax "to pay for the king's dinner."

This was nothing like the heavy pressure of taxation Jews faced elsewhere in Europe, where the Jew had, it must have seemed, to pay for every act of his life from the first to the last. Jews were taxed for passing through certain gates, for crossing certain bridges, for using certain roads, for entering certain public buildings. They were taxed for crossing the borders of the tiny Rhineland states, for buying or selling goods, for marrying. Jewish babies were taxed at birth, and no Jew could be buried until his burial tax was paid. Jewish houses were taxed according to the number and size of their rooms, which encouraged families to crowd

together in as small a space as possible. In peacetime, soldiers were billeted in Jewish quarters, and houses of prostitution were placed there, in an attempt to break down Jewish family life. To rape or kill a Jewish child was considered no crime.

By contrast, the Jewish quarters of such Spanish cities as Seville, Córdoba, and Granada were the best neighborhoods of their cities, occupied by the most beautiful houses—gracefully built around airy courtyards—and Christians vied with each other to buy houses there. It was a far cry from the ghettos of the Rhineland, where streets were too narrow for a wagon to turn around, where open sewers ran, where the Jew paid a tax to leave his quarter and another to return, and in which he was locked at night. Jews in the rest of Europe, who had heard of the life their brothers lived in Spain and Portugal, looked longingly and enviously at what lay across the Pyrenees.

Then, at the beginning of the eighth century, came the Moors.

It is popular in Spain today to speak of “the years of Arab occupation,” leaving the implication that these Arabs were no different from the nomadic illiterates who wander the African desert on camels and wear burnouses. It is hard, even today, for a Spaniard to accept the fact that the Moorish conquest of the Iberian Peninsula was the first conquest since Roman times of an inferior land by a superior people. Other invaders of Europe—the Huns, the Turks, the Normans—were barbarians. But the men who, in 711, overcame the scattered city-states of Spain were the bearers of the great Islamic culture which had flourished in such sophisticated cities as Damascus and Alexandria. They brought with them the flow of knowledge from northern Africa to southern Europe—sciences Spain had never been exposed to before, including algebra, chemistry (or alchemy), architecture—and even introduced such unheard of amenities as indoor plumbing.

The Moors, during their half millennium of rule, turned the city of Córdoba—one of several Spanish cities that responded strongly to the Moorish impact—into one of the most glittering and exciting in the world, with its great mosque, its libraries, gardens, palaces, university buildings, and what were then the most opulent private houses in Europe. Muslim historians claim that at one point under Moorish rule the city had a population of over a million; now it has shrunk to 190,000. There are said to have been more than 3,000 palaces, public baths, and mosques, plus over

80,000 shops. The main library had a collection of over 400,000 volumes. In Granada, the Moors created the incomparable Alhambra, that shimmering complex of towers, pavilions, courtyards, pools, fountains, and gardens, each arched window of each great hall designed to frame a particular picture of exquisite beauty. The Alhambra is a triumph of Moorish aesthetics, and its fountains, an engineering miracle—their graduated upward thrust dependent on gravity, with a water source located high on a mountainside above—operate with the same precision today as they did seven hundred years ago. In a room off the Courtyard of the Lions, a mosaic Star of David is prominently displayed on one wall, a reminder that the Jews and the Moors were both Semitic peoples, with ancient shared pasts.

Until recent times, in fact, when opposing nationalistic aims turned the two peoples apart, the followers of Judaism and Islam had deep interrelationships. Never in their history did Jews have a longer and more meaningful encounter with another religion than in Spain. As the Moors surged forward and upward in Spain, achieving power and grandeur, they bore the Jews upward with them. As the Moorish occupation moved northward—at its height, in 719, the Moors held nearly the entire peninsula—the Jews helped the invaders by opening towns and fortresses to them, enabling them to go on to further victories, and for this the Jews were rewarded with high positions. The role of the Jews in the Arab conquest would be remembered, of course, later on when the tide began to turn the other way.

Immediately, the Jewish and the Moorish respect for education and culture recognized each other and went hand in hand. The Jewish and the Moorish skills in politics and the arts were kindred, and instantly in sympathy. Under Moorish rule, the Jews of Spain were no longer restricted to the narrow roles of moneylenders or tax collectors. In the list of popular Jewish occupations we see “bullion merchant” drop to twelfth place, well behind such humdrum trades as “lion tamer,” “juggler,” and “mule seller.” Leading the list, by contrast, is “physician,” followed by “public official,” and “clerk of the treasury.” Moorish sophistication and breadth of mind encouraged Jews to become inventors, artisans, soldiers, lovers, mystics, scholars—out of the darkness and solitude an “outsider” always feels, into the shining circles of magic and poetry.

By the eleventh century, the Jewish stamp was firmly on the land, and the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries in Spain and Portugal represent a kind of golden age for Jews. From 1200 on, Jews virtually monopolized the medical profession, a fact that was to cause serious trouble for both Jews and Christians later on, and in the kingdom of Aragon it was said: "There was not a noble or prelate in the land who did not keep a Jewish physician." Jews adorned the other professions, and Jewish advocates, judges, architects, scientists, and writers were heavily relied upon by the courts of both Aragon and Castile. Jews were equally important in their financial service to the kings of Spain, where, in one report, we find them "in key positions as ministers, royal counsellors, farmers of state revenue, financiers of military enterprises and as major domos of the estates of the Crown and of the higher nobility." In addition, Jews provided the country's apothecaries, astronomers, map makers, navigators, and designers of navigational and other scientific instruments. Jews were also prominent as merchants dealing in silver, spices, wine, fur, timber, and slaves.

There were isolated outbreaks of anti-Semitism from time to time. The Crusades of the eleventh and twelfth centuries frequently provided excuses for local pogroms, the rationale being: "Let us purify our own home as well as the land of the infidel," and the number of these occurrences increased as Christian Spain began its long push southward again, dividing the land more equally between Christianity and Islam, and as the Moorish influence began to wane. But in general, through these centuries—1100 to 1390—fresh breezes of tolerance and intersectarian understanding seemed to blow across Iberia.

This was partly because Christian kings tended to follow the enlightened examples of their Moorish predecessors. Having seen what the Jews had done for the Moors, the Christian kings were eager for Jewish favor. A number of kings considered themselves the protectors of the Jews, and in many places the Jews literally belonged to the Crown. Two of the greatest kings, James I of Aragon and Ferdinand III of Castile, were decidedly pro-Semitic. Ferdinand III was fiercely possessive of what he called "my Jews," and was quick to put down any attempt to persecute them. He often described himself as a "king of three religions" and, in proud reply, a Castilian rabbi declared to his congregation: "The kings and lords of Castile have had this advantage, that their Jewish subjects, reflecting the

magnificence of their lords, have been the most learned, the most distinguished Jews that there have been in all the realms of the dispersion; they are distinguished in four ways: in lineage, in wealth, in virtues, in science.” When Ferdinand III died, his son, Alfonso X, erected a monumental mausoleum for his father, and ordered the dead king’s eulogy inscribed upon it in Castilian, Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew. After death, Ferdinand became known as Ferdinand the Saintly.

His son, known as Alfonso the Wise and Alfonso the Learned, was in many ways more remarkable than his father. He patterned his rule after that of the Moorish king Abdulrahman III, whose reign had been majestic, broad-minded, and tolerant, and Alfonso’s may have surpassed Abdulrahman’s in its magnanimity and influence. In his researches, Alfonso always turned to Jewish scholars, “the best,” and he founded the celebrated center of astronomic learning at Toledo. Part of the scientific output of this institution, the Alphonsine Tables, were to figure importantly in the navigational thinking of the young Christopher Columbus.

Up to Alfonso’s time, the official language of the royal court, of diplomacy, and of the universities had been Latin. Since it was the language of the Church, of their persecutors, it was a tongue that the Jews instinctively regarded with aversion. The upper-class Jews preferred Castilian, and the lower classes spoke Ladino, or Judeo-Spanish, written in Hebrew characters, among themselves. Alfonso and his Jewish scholars codified Castilian, abolished Latin, and declared Castilian the official language of Christian Spain, to the great rejoicing of the Jewish community.*

These were years when, according to the historian Americo Castro: “In the commercial sphere no visible barriers separated Jewish, Christian, and Saracen merchants.... Christian contractors built Jewish houses, and Jewish craftsmen worked for Christian employers. Jewish advocates represented gentile clients in the secular courts. Jewish brokers acted as intermediaries between Christian and Moorish principals. As a by-product, such continuous daily contacts inevitably fostered tolerance and friendly relationships, despite the irritations kept alive in the name of religion.” In the south, in Andalusia, still under Moorish control, it was the same: a civilized society that made no distinction as to creed, where Jew, Moor, and Hidalgo lived in accord and mutuality, though it is interesting to note that

the term “blue blood” originated here. In those with light skin, the blue veins of hands and wrists showed through the skin. The Moors were not Negroes but they were dark and tanned from the sun. Their “blue” blood did not show.

During these years, Spanish Jews enjoyed the privilege, almost universally denied to Jews elsewhere, of wearing arms. Contemporary accounts describe dashing Jewish knights, elegantly fitted out, riding through cities on horseback, swords glittering in the sun. Many bore elaborate multiple names, and had been given the title of “Don.” From Portugal, a report to King John II remarks: “We notice Jewish cavaliers, mounted on richly caparisoned horses and mules, in fine cloaks, cassocks, silk doublets, closed hoods, and with gilt swords.” Jews organized their own sports and amusements, participated in jousts and tournaments of their own, and these often had a particularly Jewish flavor. In one popular pastime, Jewish knights, to the blare of horns and bugles, tilted with wooden staves at an effigy representing Haman, the Biblical enemy of the Jews in the Book of Esther, and, at the termination of the game, burned Haman on a mock funeral pyre while everybody sang and danced.

Then why did it end? What caused three tranquil centuries to turn suddenly into something so different, so violent and bloody, and so prolonged that it has continued into modern times? What sent Spain hurtling in a new and terrible direction? Actually, it was a combination of many forces, some obvious, some subtle, some planned, some accidental that changed life totally for the Jews of Spain. True, Moorish power, which had helped bring the Jews to power, was on the wane. By 1480, Granada was the last Moorish stronghold on the peninsula. But long before that, factors had begun to accumulate and align themselves against the Jews.

Though Spain and Portugal were isolated and cut off, emotionally as well as geographically, from the rest of Europe, they cannot have been unaware of what was going on elsewhere, where conditions for Jews were steadily worsening. There was the problem of dress, of identification. When Pope Innocent III introduced the Jewish badge in 1215, he particularly stressed that his reason was that Jews had been dressing and looking far too much like other people, that intermarriages with Christians had occurred as a result. The prevailing feeling was that Jews were “different,” and that their difference must be made unmistakable. The yellow badge became the Jews’

greatest insult, “the mark of the beaten, reviled, scorned, abused by everyone,” according to one medieval writer. The position of the Jew in various lands could be gauged by the size of the badge each country prescribed. In France and Italy, the circular badge was relatively small. Germany required the largest badges and in the most reactionary city-states of Bavaria the badge was soon deemed not degrading enough, and laws were passed enjoining Jews to wear only the colors yellow and black, and to walk barefoot.

At the Spanish Jews’ heated insistence, the papal bull decreeing the badge was not enforced in thirteenth-century Spain. (In some cities, Jews were allowed to buy exemptions from the badge; in others, the edict was simply ignored.) For many years, Jewish scholars and rabbis had worn the cope—a long embroidered cloak, open at the front and clasped at the throat with a brooch—when they walked the streets. They considered the cope an appropriate ecclesiastical vestment, even though it belonged specifically to the costume of the Christian Church.

Still, the Jews must have been aware that the tide was beginning to run against them. Many Spanish moneylenders were still Jews, as were tax collectors—two professions that have never rated high in popularity among the general populace. The old dark myths began to be unearthed again of the abominations that supposedly took place in synagogues, that on Good Friday the Jews crucified young Christian boys and drank their blood. By unhappy coincidence, while these rumblings and mutterings were being heard, the Black Plague marched across the European continent, and Jewish doctors, helpless in its path, were accused of poisoning their Christian patients. Bigotry, fed by fear, flourished.

The Seventh, and last, Crusade ended unsuccessfully in 1270. The spirit of the Crusades had always been as much commercial as religious—with the profitable sacking and looting of the land of the infidel just as important (if not a good deal more so) than the claiming of his immortal soul. The Seventh was a failure in terms of loss of both life and money and, all over Europe, the prevailing mood toward the infidel grew harsh and bitter. Purification of the blood and homogeneity of faith became twin preoccupations. If the infidel of the East was now too costly to reach, then where could he be found? Eyes turned homeward, and there he was. The

century following 1270, then, can well be labeled a Home Crusade, with ridding the homeland of “outsiders” a major theme.

Meanwhile, Moorish power in Spain was declining. The Islamic hand that had pulled the Jews upward was no longer outstretched. Both Jews and Moors who saw the writing on the wall began converting to Catholicism, and now the *Conversos*, or New Christians, created a problem all their own. It was often the *Converso* who became the greatest enemy of his former religion, the most virulent anti-Semite, who took it upon himself to lead the attack against the “reprobate Jews.” Such a *Converso* was Don Pablo de Santa María, who, before his conversion in the early 1400’s, was named Selemoh ha-Levi.* The former chief rabbi of Burgos, he now became the bishop of Burgos. It is a monstrous irony that this ex-rabbi, famous throughout Spain for his scholarship, should have become the scourge of the Jews.

Don Pablo’s specialty was accusing the *Conversos*, of which he was one, of secretly betraying their faith, of “Judaizing.” He was the first to draw the distinction between “faithful” *Conversos* and the “faithless” ones, between true Christians and false. The more Christian zeal a *Converso* displayed, Don Pablo pointed out, the greater was the likelihood that this *Converso* was a secret Jew or *Marrano*—literally “pig” in Spanish. (It has also been said that these Jews were called Marranos because they “ate pork in the streets,” so badly did they want—and need—to be taken for true Christians.) Don Pablo obviously did not intend his own extreme zeal to be considered in this light.

He rose rapidly and became tutor to Prince John, the future John II of Castile, father of Isabella. He also placed in high positions in the Church and government many members of his large family, many of whom shared his anti-Semitic obsession. (His wife and sons, on the other hand, renounced him.) Don Pablo repeatedly urged the reenactment of old Visigothic laws under which a new Christian relapsing into Judaism could be punished with the death penalty, and he wrote these grimly prophetic words: “I believe that if in this our time a true *inquisition* were made, numberless would be those who would be given over to the fire amongst those who would really be found *judaizing*; who, if they are not down here more cruelly punished than public Jews, will be burnt forever in eternal fire.”

And, of course, the fact is that he may have been right. “Numberless” Jews may indeed have made the gesture of converting only because they considered it prudent, and had simply taken their old religion underground. Others who may have been sincere converts at the outset may have suffered second thoughts. The *Converso* immediately found himself an object of extreme suspicion since, thanks to the efforts of Don Pablo, “New Christian” had become synonymous with “false Christian.” The *Converso*’s former coreligionists had little use for him and so the *Converso* became a sort of social outcast. Whereas he had had status as a Jew, he must have begun to think little of a religion that treated its converts with so little charity. Who could blame him for returning, in private, to his old faith?

Don Pablo used the pulpit, the most effective medium of communication of his day, to spread his views. When one of his coagitators declared, in a sermon, that he possessed positive proof that one hundred circumcisions had been performed on sons of Judaizing Christians, the prelate was rebuked and called a liar by the king, but the episode demonstrates another force that was working against the Jews. Medieval Spain was a ceaseless battleground for power, not only Christian versus Moorish but a three-way struggle between the kings, the bishops of the Church, and the feudal nobles. The Moors and, in turn, the kings, had been the Jews’ protectors. Now, as Spanish cities grew and became more important, the dukedoms of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were coalescing. The kings had used the Jews and the bourgeoisie in their struggle against the lesser nobles; the nobles, meanwhile, were aligned with the Church. Now the nobles sided with Don Pablo de Santa María and other bishops to wrest the Jews away from the kings.

At the heart of the billowing anti-Semitism was, of course, envy—a human trait and a trait predominant in what has been called the Spanish temper. The Jews had simply become too rich, too powerful, too important in too many walks of life. Just as the Crusades had been of a mixed religious and commercial motivation—conversion of the infidel no more important than pillaging his fields and emptying his vaults—so did the episodes of prejudice and the scattered anti-Jewish pogroms that broke out in the fourteenth century have only partly to do with matters of faith. They were undertaken in jealousy, with intent to get back, by force, what less fortunate non-Jews believed to have been unrightfully taken away from

them. As Chancellor Pedro López de Ayala wrote in his diary after a particularly savage pogrom in Seville, in which the rich Jewish quarter of the city was looted and many were murdered: “And it was all cupidity to rob, rather than devotion.”

The pogroms spread like brush fire, and it was clear that a terrible twilight was at hand. In 1390, the Jews of Majorca were forbidden to carry arms. The question of the Jewish badge—“yellow, in circumference four fingers, to be worn over the heart”—became specific. Riots took place in several cities, and suddenly in 1391 in Seville—in direct defiance of orders from his king—a priest named Don Ferrán Martínez led an armed mob into the *judería*. After scattering the king’s soldiers, Martínez and his men massacred more than four thousand Jews, looted and burned their houses. Pogroms were now an institution across the face of Spain, and they erupted in Toledo, Valencia, Barcelona. After each pogrom, forcible mass baptisms and conversions were inflicted on the Jewish survivors. These Jews, presented with a faith that wielded a cross in one hand and a knife in the other, were also called *Conversos*, and, needless to say, went into a category all their own.

Through the next twenty years conditions grew steadily more severe, and thousands of Jews emigrated from Spain, scattering across the face of Europe. In 1421, Saint Vincent Ferrer and the Chancellor of Castile dictated a long series of anti-Semitic and anti-Moorish laws. Jews and Moors alike were required to wear identifying badges; they were forbidden to hold office or to possess titles; they were excluded from such trades as those of grocer, carpenter, tailor, and butcher. They could not change their residences. They could not hire Christians to work for them. They could not eat, drink, talk, or bathe with Christians under the new laws. They were forbidden to wear anything but “coarse clothing.” One Jew complained:

They forced strange clothing upon us. They kept us from trade, farming, and the crafts. They compelled us to grow our beards and our hair long. Instead of silken apparel, we were obliged to wear wretched clothes which drew contempt upon us. Unshaved, we appeared like mourners. Starvation stared everyone in the face....

However, the legislation did have the effect that it claimed it desired. Conversions stepped up markedly, while the line between “faithful” and “faithless” *Converso* became very dim. In the years following Don Pablo de Santa María, it was easier to suppose that everyone was faithless, and bloody battles continued—in Toledo in 1467, in Córdoba in 1473, and, in 1474, an incredible uprising where a young *Converso* led a bloodthirsty crowd in Segovia in a raid against other *Conversos*. In the middle of this maelstrom, this tumult of cross- and countercurrents, of warring factors and faiths and ideologies, of opposing ambitions and thrusts for power and money, there stepped a youngish pair of royal newlyweds, Queen Isabella of Castile, and King Ferdinand of Aragon.

It was a dynastic union, and had been planned that way by—the ironies do not cease—a small group of Jews from the very highest court and banking circles of Spain. The two principal matchmakers were Don Abraham Senior of Castile, and Don Selemoh of Aragon, men of such prominence that they had never taken the trouble to be baptized. (“Yes,” Aunt Ellie would assure the children when she spoke of these great men. “We are connected, we are connected.”) It was their grand notion to bring the two great kingdoms—which had been gradually coalescing from the multitude of minor ones—into a single, even greater whole. Their idea represented an early form of nationalism not unlike de Gaulle’s in modern France; both men were intensely chauvinistic, dedicated to making Spain the mightiest nation in the world. It was Don Abraham of Castile who invited Ferdinand to his house and put him up there while Ferdinand paid formal court to Isabella, and who brought Ferdinand on his first secret visit to inspect his bride-to-be. It was Don Selemoh who served as the intermediary in the presentation of a magnificent golden necklace to Isabella, Ferdinand’s engagement gift, purchased, of course, with Jewish money. It was Don Abraham who, in conversations with his royal house guest, was the first to suggest that one of Ferdinand and Isabella’s future offspring might be wed to a Portuguese prince or princess, thus placing the entire Iberian peninsula under one rule. The two men negotiated on all details involving Isabella’s dowry to her husband.

In Granada a splendid catafalque rises above the place where, in simple leaden caskets, the Catholic monarchs rest. The king, or at least his marble effigy, lies with his hands folded on his chest, looking very regal, his head

not even denting the stone pillow beneath it—an indication, it has been said, of his cranial capacity in life. His queen lies at his left, hands folded, and for some reason that has never been explained, her head is turned away from her husband, her eyes seemingly fixed contemplatively on the middle distance, giving her a look that is both thoughtful and estranged, and the disturbing mood created by the pair is one of disunion and disaffection. Certainly this must have been the queen's attitude toward her husband while she lived. He was a perpetual adulterer, and his many mistresses, and the ensuing bastard children with which he scattered the Spanish landscape, must have been a heavy cross for the queen to bear. It was a notably unhappy marriage, with Isabella emerging as the more interesting partner in it.

This stern, practical, pious, thorough woman, who treasured her rents and her “power to be feared,” had—through the efforts of Don Abraham Senior and Don Selemoh of Aragon—married a man almost totally her opposite. Where Isabella was direct and forthright, Ferdinand was devious and sly. Where Isabella was plain, Ferdinand was dashing and handsome. A contemporary describes his “merry” eyes, and “his hair dark and straight, and of good complexion.” For all her jealousy, it was said that Ferdinand “loved the Queen his wife dearly, yet he gave himself to other women.” Also, “He enjoyed all kinds of games such as ball, chess or royal tables, and he devoted to this pleasure more time than he ought to have done.” At the same time, “He was also given to following advice, especially that of the Queen, for he knew her great competence.” Also, she was some two years older than he.

Although history has labeled Ferdinand and Isabella as archenemies of the Jews, it is hard to believe that they themselves were anti-Semitic. The royal household had a very Jewish complexion, and the king and queen were literally surrounded by Jews. Some, like Don Abraham Senior, had not converted, while others were *Conversos*. These included Hernando de Pulgar, the queen's confidential secretary, and the queen's confessor, Fray Hernando de Talavera. The king and queen depended enormously on these men, and on the guidance and support of other *Converso* advisers, and before Ferdinand assumed his father's throne he had officially increased the power of the *Conversos* at court. The general bailiff of Aragon, the grand treasurer, and the rational master, were all members of the Sánchez family,

baptized Jews. *Conversos* also held the three top military posts in Ferdinand's command—heads of the fortresses of Perpignan and Pamplona, and commander of the fleet off Majorca. The king's private chamberlain, Cabrero, was an ex-Jew.

Isabella's household was no different, and *Conversos* about her included her closest woman friend, the Marquesa de Moya, who closed Isabella's eyes at her death. It was the same everywhere in Spain. In Aragon, the vice-chancellor of the kingdom, the comptroller general of the royal household, the treasurer of the kingdom of Navarre, an admiral, a vice-principal of the University of Saragossa, were all members of the large and powerful La Caballería family, as were several pivotal members of Ferdinand's council. Don Juan Pacheco, Marquis of Villena and Grand Master of the Order of Santiago, was descended on both sides from an ex-Jew named Ruy Capón, and Don Juan's brother, Don Pedro Girón, was the equally exalted Grand Master of the Order of Calatrava. Their uncle was archbishop of Toledo, and an ex-Jew—everyone knew. At least seven of the principal prelates of the kingdom were of Jewish descent, including at least two bishops. Why, then, with Jews and ex-Jews serving them in so many important areas, did Ferdinand and Isabella permit a policy to develop that was so patently destructive and disruptive of their mightiest ambition—a great and unified Spanish nation? How could a policy of ferreting out, and separating, the true Christians from the false, the faithful converts from the secretly “Judaizing” ones, have possibly been considered practical, much less wise? The crucial, and virtually unanswerable, question became: who was Jewish and who was not? In the three generations that had passed since the massacre of 1391, thousands of Jews had been baptized. Throughout the fifteenth century, many of the wealthier New Christians had married into families of the old Catholic nobility.

Did Ferdinand and Isabella merely surrender to popular sentiment—which was not at all like them—or did they actually believe that the Jew had infested Spain and had to be removed? That anti-Semitism had become popular there is no doubt. It is also possible that when the Jewish court physician failed to save the life of one of her sons, the Infante Don Juan, Isabella may have become embittered against the Jews and been reminded of old myths of Jews as poisoners of wells and children. And anti-Semites among the *Conversos* had begun to tell the monarchs that most of the

conversions were only feigned, and recalled an ancient Castilian legend that developed under the reign of Peter I. Peter, it was said, used to wear a waistband given him by his wife, Doña Blanca, who wanted to expel the Jews. His mistress, Doña María de Padilla, obtained the waistband with the help of an old Jew who was powerful at court, and the Jew placed a curse on it so that the next time Peter wore it—at a court ceremony, when he was in his full regalia—the waistband suddenly turned into a serpent and, before the eyes of the horrified onlookers, coiled itself around the king's neck and strangled him.

The Inquisition was first suggested to the king and queen by the Dominican prior of Saint Paul in Seville, backed by the papal nuncio, Nicolao Franco. The king and queen agreed, it is said, “reluctantly” that an “inquisition,” or inquiry, be undertaken, but placed the leadership of it in the hands of the great Cardinal of Spain, the Archbishop of Seville, Pedro González de Mendoza, who assured their majesties that the approach to Judaizing *Conversos* would be evangelical—through education, argument, and preaching, rather than force. But the lower clergy, the lesser nobles, and the general public quickly became impatient with the cardinal's gentle ways and called for sterner measures. Of the cardinal's methods, the historian Andrés Bernaldez wrote: “In all this, two years were wasted and it was of no avail, for each did what he used to do, and to change one's habits is a wrench as bad as death.” In 1479, the king and queen—still reluctant—gave in to the popular pressures surrounding them and founded the Inquisition.

Anti-Semitism became official, and the rulers embarked upon a policy of systematic expulsion. In 1481, Jews were ordered confined to their *juderías*. Next, a partial expulsion was ordered of all the Jews in Andalusia. In 1483, Jews were decreed expelled from Seville and Córdoba and, in 1486, from Saragossa, Abarán, and Teruel.

On January 2, 1492, Isabella and Ferdinand arrived in Granada, the last state in Moorish power, to accept its final surrender and receive its keys. Slowly the banner bearing the Cross was raised over the Alhambra while, just as slowly, the crescent of Islam was lowered. It must have been a moment of unparalleled emotion, of momentous impact, as the Moorish King Boabdil the Young moved, on foot, toward the mounted Ferdinand, to offer the symbol of capitulation after over seven hundred years of Moorish sway. His head was high and proud. The Christian *Reconquista* was

complete. Spain's medieval era had come to an end. As the Cross and royal banner rose above the tower of Comares, the royal knights at arms chanted, "Granada, Granada for King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella." Around her, the queen's chapel of singers began to sing the solemn hymn of thanks, "*Te Deum Laudamus*." Granada's fall must indeed have seemed decreed by divine will. The queen, overcome, fell to her knees and wept. She was not quite forty-one years old.

At this stirring moment when the youthful king in his turban walked slowly toward her, carrying the keys, when she flung herself to her knees convinced she must be witnessing an act of God's holy will, did she remember the old accusations of how, seven centuries before, it was the Jews who "opened the gates" to ungodly Moors? Did she give weight to the powerful and long alliance of the two cultures, and did she now see the Jews and the Moors as inseparable enemy forces? Did she finally convince herself that what the churchmen and the nobles had been telling her was true, that Spain could triumph only if permanently cleansed of all unconverted Moors and Jews? It is more than likely, because three months after Granada's fall the famous Expulsion Edict of 1492 was issued, with the solemn words:

It seems that much harm is done to Christians by the community or conversation they have held and hold with Jews, who pride themselves on always attempting, by whatever means, to subvert our Holy Catholic faith ... instructing our faithful in the beliefs and ceremonies of their law ... attempting to circumcise them and their sons ... giving or taking to them unleavened bread and dead meats....

We order all Jews and Jewesses of whatever age that before the end of this month of July they depart with their sons and daughters and manservants and maidservants and relatives, big and small ... and not dare to return.

Figures are unreliable, but it is estimated that somewhere between 165,000 and 400,000 people emigrated from the peninsula in the months that followed. Obviously, the figure for those who chose the alternative, and remained to accept baptism, is even shakier, but it is generally placed at about 50,000. As Jews poured out of the country, the Sultan of Turkey,

Bajazet II, is said to have commented that he “marvelled greatly at expelling the Jews from Spain, since this was to expel its wealth.” He said, “The King of Spain must have lost his mind. He is expelling his best subjects,” and he issued an invitation to Jews who so wished to come and settle in Turkey.

It is no coincidence that Columbus’ expedition was launched that same calamitous year. It too was an extension, with the same mixed religious and commercial motives, of the Crusades; after the fall of Granada, the Home Crusade might be said to have been completed. The next logical step was westward, across the Atlantic.

One of the charming legends that have been perpetuated about Queen Isabella is that she impulsively, one might even say girlishly, offered to pawn (or sell—the stories vary) her jewels to finance Columbus on his voyage. Like so many charming legends, this one turns out to be nothing more than that. True, Isabella’s treasury was nearly empty. But her coffers were rapidly filling up with property confiscated from departing Jews. Jews filled other roles in the expedition.

When he first plotted his course, Columbus used charts prepared by Judah Cresques, known as “the map Jew,” head of the Portuguese School of Navigation in Lisbon. The almanacs and astronomical tables that Columbus gathered for the trip were compiled by Abraham ben Zacuto, a Jewish professor at the University of Salamanca. It was Señor Zacuto who introduced Columbus and the officers of his expedition to the prominent Jewish banker Don Isaac Abravanel, who was one of the first to offer Columbus financial backing. When still more money was needed, and when Isabella was at the point of abandoning the project for lack of funds, Abravanel turned to other Jewish bankers, including Luis de Santangel, Gabriel Sánchez, and Abraham Senior, who had played such an important role in bringing Isabella and Ferdinand to the altar. It is because of these bankers that the expedition was able to leave Spain under the Spanish flag and, as a result of their part in the undertaking, Columbus’ first word back to Spain about his discovery was addressed not to the queen—which would have been courteous—but to Señores Santangel, Sánchez, and Senior, his bankers, which was practical. As a result of these activities, Professor H. P. Adams of Johns Hopkins has commented: “Not jewels, but Jews, were the real financial basis of the first expedition of Columbus.”

There is also a distinct possibility that Columbus himself was a Marrano, the son of parents named Colón, who had escaped from Spain to Genoa during one of the pogroms. He was certainly a very odd sort of Genoese. Why, for example, did he write and speak such poor Italian—and yet speak Castilian Spanish so fluently that he could move with ease in the highest circles of the Spanish court? Nothing but puzzles and blind alleys surround the actual place and circumstances of Columbus' birth. For centuries, Portugal has refused to honor Columbus, claiming that he was a “foreigner,” and yet it is known that for several years before his expedition he lived in Portugal and was married to a Portuguese girl. (In 1968, Portugal remedied the situation by erecting a statue of him on the Portuguese island of Madeira.) Was Columbus a secret Jew? A large school of thought believes so. He certainly surrounded himself with Marranos and *Conversos* when he was making up his crew. Aboard the *Santa María*, both Mestre Bernal, the physician, and Marco, the ship's surgeon, were Jews. The first man ashore in the New World was probably also a Jew: Luis de Torres, the official interpreter for the expedition. He had been brought along on the voyage because the expedition expected to reach the Orient.

Though the monarchs' Expulsion Edict was quite specific, there was a certain leeway in its interpretation. Bribery was not unknown in the fifteenth century, and Portuguese officials were even easier to bribe than those of Spain, which was saying very little. The first Jews affected by the edict were the poorest, who could afford no bribes; richer and more prominent people could make arrangements. The royal matchmaker Abraham Senior, for example, who had served the king so well—he had helped the king pay off many of his mistresses, and came to his assistance whenever his amorous adventures threatened to be dangerous—was among the Jews who were given permission to take whatever personal possessions they wished out of the country, after a few routine donations were made to certain ministers and public causes. The government's debt to Senior—in the stunning amount of 1,500,000 *maravedis*—was also ordered paid. Senior, however, after thinking it over, reported to his old friend and former house guest King Ferdinand that he would prefer to remain in Madrid, and that he would accept baptism as the price. The king was delighted, and the Senior family was baptized in the palace and changed its name to Coronel. Don Abraham, after all, was an old man, and perhaps he had grown weary

of the struggle. His friend and former colleague Don Isaac Abravanel, offered the same terms, chose to leave Spain rather than convert, and thus the great Abravanel name was carried out into Europe and, eventually, the United States.

The Jews who could not muster the price of a bribe were herded out of Spain like cattle. They were allowed to take nothing with them. To sell their houses or goods, they were forced to take whatever a buyer might deign to give them, and whatever they received was ordered turned over to the king. According to one chronicler: “They went around asking for buyers and found none to buy; some sold a house for an ass, and a vineyard for a little cloth and linen, since they could not take away gold.”

While Columbus was assembling his fleet in Cádiz, he watched the harbor, which was filled with tiny boats waiting to carry away the Jews. If indeed he was the son of parents who were clandestine Jews, he must have viewed the hectic scene with queerly mixed emotions. The ships assigned to take the refugees were overcrowded, badly managed, and faced late-winter storms at sea. Those who boarded Turkish ships—sent by the sultan himself—found the Turkish sailors less hospitable than their leader. Some Jews had hit upon the idea of swallowing gold and silver pieces in order to take their money with them. Of these a rabbi whose father was one of the early exiles wrote: “Some of them the Turks killed to take out the gold which they had swallowed to hide it; some of them hunger and the plague consumed, and some of them were cast naked by the captains on the isles of the sea; and some of them were sold for man-servants and maid-servants in Genoa and its villages, and some of them were cast into the sea.”

When Aunt Ellie reached this point in her stories, the children’s eyes would be as wide as saucers.

* Prayer books in Spanish synagogues were promptly reprinted in Castilian, an interesting contrast to the attitudes of American Orthodox Jews of the twentieth century, who thoroughly disapprove of Reform congregations, where English, the language of the country, is spoken.

* This *Converso* name change is fairly typical. The *Converso* felt a need to advertise his new faith with special enthusiasm, and often selected the name of a Catholic saint.

THE TWENTY-THREE

On the first day of September, 1654, a tiny privateer, the *Saint Charles*, sailing under the French flag, appeared in what is now New York Harbor. It was something of a surprise to the fortress colony of New Amsterdam, which had been established on the tip of Manhattan island barely thirty years earlier, to learn that twenty-three of the *Saint Charles* passengers were Jews.

More than 150 years had passed since the Expulsion Edict, and the Catholic monarchs had long ago been placed in their uncomfortable-looking repose. And yet the twenty-three were victims of the monarchs' edict also, part of a continuing stream of escapees from Inquisitional Spain, Portugal, and all Spanish and Portuguese possessions on both sides of the Atlantic, where the Inquisition had been quickly established.

The dispersion following the Expulsion Edict was chaotic, following no set paths. Jews who refused to convert scattered in all directions—southward into Africa, eastward into Greece and Turkey, northward into Europe. Only one rule applied: the richer the Jew, the more liberal he could be with his bribes and, therefore, the freer he was in his choice of destination. The poorest Jews fled across the Gibraltar straits into the mountains of Morocco. The richest went to Holland—and for good reason. This tiny, doughty country had, from as early as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—just as it has today—a record and reputation of tolerance, of treating “outsiders” with respect and kindness. And so the Jews who escaped to Holland from Spain and Portugal found not only a friendly atmosphere where they could reestablish their congregations, but also a

place where they could practice their businesses and professions. The city of Amsterdam was already an important money capital. In Holland the Sephardim were soon prospering again and occupying positions very much like those they formerly had held in Iberia. By the early seventeenth century, the Sephardim were an important part of the Dutch economy.

And the Netherlanders of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the most cultivated people in Europe. This was the great era of Dutch painting, of Frans Hals and Rembrandt and Vermeer. It was an age of opulence and luxury, and in Holland ordinary burghers enjoyed comforts in their homes that were found only in the palaces of princes elsewhere. Across the North Sea, in England, members of the royal courts were still eating with their fingers, throwing their bones to mongrel dogs who roamed, snarling, under dinner tables. They were using their sleeves for napkins, strewing the royal halls with rushes instead of rugs, and had barely begun to discover the use of window glass. The rich of Amsterdam, meanwhile, were living in houses with thick carpets from the Orient and beautiful furniture, eating off porcelain plates with all the table silver of modern times. The affinity between the elegant Dutch and the aristocratic Sephardim was easy to understand.

Because the oldest Sephardic families in America can usually point to a Netherlands interlude in their collective past, they have an added point of pride. As one of the New York Nathans says today: "We were ladies and gentlemen in Spain, and we became ladies and gentlemen in Holland." Cream rises to the top, regardless of its location.

In the years following Columbus' discovery, Dutch explorers, along with explorers from other European countries, fanned out across the Atlantic, establishing colonies in North and South America, the Caribbean islands, Africa, and the Orient. As the Dutch established colonies, Sephardim from Holland followed them, helping the Dutch put their colonies in business. As a result of the Dutch colonial thrust, Sephardic communities can be found today virtually wherever the Dutch had outposts—Guiana, Polynesia, the West Indies. The oldest Jewish cemetery in the New World is the Sephardic burying ground on the Dutch West Indian island of Curaçao.

A particularly important Jewish settlement had been made in Brazil. Discovered by a Spaniard, Brazil was claimed for Portugal in 1500 by the Portuguese explorer Pedro Alvarez Cabral. Soon other nations were eyeing

this vast and fertile land and its rapidly growing sugar industry. In 1624, the Dutch West India Company—backed by the Dutch government—launched a full-scale military campaign against Brazil and captured Recife, which brought Brazil into Dutch hands.

Jews, many of them Marranos, had settled in Brazil during the century of Portuguese rule. With the Dutch victory and the abolition of the Inquisition—along with new arrivals from Holland of Sephardim who followed the Dutch conquest in a now familiar pattern—there was a great rush of reconversion to Judaism. Ex-Catholics were welcomed back into the synagogue, and before long Recife had a thriving and openly Jewish community.

The position of Jews in Brazil was now equal to that of the Protestant Dutch, with the same rights and privileges, and was considerably superior to that of the conquered Portuguese Catholics, whom the Dutch naturally endeavored to keep powerless. Unfortunately for the Jews, this state of affairs lasted only thirty years. In 1654, after a long and bloody siege by the Portuguese, the Dutch surrendered Recife, and Brazil became once more a colony of Portugal. The Jews' situation had changed utterly. The grim hand of the Inquisition reached out again.

But the leader of the Portuguese invaders, General Barreto, was a reasonably lenient man. He ordered the Jews out of Brazil, but he didn't hurry them unduly. In his diary, David Franco Mendes, one of the leaders of the Brazilian Jewish colony, and another early member of the ubiquitous Mendes clan, describes the situation:

... And it came to pass that in the year 1654, the Portuguese came back, and from the Hollanders took their lands by force. And God had compassion on His people, and gave it favor and grace in the eyes of the mighty ruler, Barreto, who should be favorably remembered, and he caused it to be proclaimed throughout his Army that every one of his soldiers should be careful not to wrong or persecute any of the children of Israel, and that if any should wilfully transgress his command his life would be forfeited....

General Barreto's proclamation pardoned "All nations, of whatever quality or religion they may be ... for having been in rebellion against the Crown of Portugal.... The same shall apply to all the Jews who are in

Recife and Murits-Stadt.” To find a conqueror in such a forgiving mood is rare indeed. The Jews (and the other Dutch colonists) were given three months to conclude their affairs in Brazil, and were told, according to Mendes’ diary, that they

could sell their houses and goods at an adequate price and in the most advantageous manner. And he gave permission to our brethren initiated into the covenant of Abraham (who now number more than six hundred souls) to return to our country here. And he commanded that if there were not enough Dutch ships in the harbor, as many Portuguese ships within his dominion should be given them until a sufficient number should be obtained. And all our people went down to the sea in sixteen ships, spread sail, and God led them to their destination to this land.

“This land,” in the case of David Franco Mendes, was familiar and sophisticated Holland. Of the sixteen ships that set sail that May, fifteen arrived at their Netherlands destination. The passengers of the sixteenth had a different fate. Blown off course and separated from its sister ships, it was set upon by Spanish pirates. Its passengers were taken prisoner, its cargo was confiscated, and the ship was set afire and sunk. The prisoners were told that as Jews they would be taken to a Mediterranean port, where they would be sold as slaves. But soon—it is not clear how many days or weeks later—the pirate vessel was sighted by the *Saint Charles*, which was captained by a Frenchman named Jacques de la Motthe. In a skirmish at sea, the pirates were defeated and the prisoners rescued and taken aboard the *Saint Charles*, which, it turned out, was bound for a place David Franco Mendes describes in his journal as “the end of the inhabited earth,” a hamlet that consisted mostly of warehouses, called New Amsterdam.

Captain de la Motthe was not exactly a cordial host, and the Jews may well have wondered if they might have been better off in the hands of Spanish pirates. His boat was small and already overloaded, and de la Motthe insisted that they abandon much of their personal belongings. When his ship dropped anchor in what is now New York Harbor, and when the twenty-three Jews prepared to go ashore, de la Motthe refused to let any of their remaining goods off his ship until every stiver of their passage money had been paid. It is clear that, collectively, the twenty-three Jews had not

enough cash to pay for a second set of transatlantic tickets, having already paid for passage from Recife to Amsterdam and wound up in the opposite direction.

The Jews tried to reason with de la Motthe, arguing that they would soon be receiving help from friends and relatives in Holland, but the captain was adamant. Poor, without food, houses, or friends in the new land, but, thanks to their considerable Dutch connections, at least able to speak the language of the Dutch colony, the twenty-three went ashore with only the clothes they wore on their backs. They set up a camp of sorts on the banks of the Hudson, just outside the settlement, and began a long struggle to come to terms with de la Motthe.

On Monday, September 7, 1654, about a week after their arrival, the Jews were ordered to appear before the Worshipful Court of Burgomasters and Scepens of the City of New Amsterdam. According to the court records, translated from the Dutch:

Jacques de la Motthe, master of the bark St. Cararina [*sic*], by a petition written in French, requests payment of the freight and board of the Jews whom he brought here ... according to agreement and contract, in which each is bound *in solidum*, and that therefore, whatever furniture and other property they may have on board his bark may be publicly sold by order of the Court, in payment of their debt. He verbally declares that the Netherlanders who came over with him, are not included in the contract and have satisfied him. Solomon Pietersen, a Jew, appears in Court and says that the nine hundred and odd guilders of the 2,500 are paid, and that there are twenty-three souls, big and little, who must pay equally.

Who was “Solomon Pietersen, a Jew”? He is not included in the pages of Dr. Stern’s book, nor does he appear to have been one of the twenty-three *Saint Charles* passengers. Had he preceded the twenty-three in some way? Perhaps so. His willingness to go before the court in their behalf indicates that he had a certain familiarity with the burgomasters of New Amsterdam, and he obviously spoke fluent Dutch. There is also evidence (his name, for one thing) that Pietersen was an Ashkenazic,* or German, Jew, and—for all his helpfulness—there are indications that Pietersen’s efforts were not universally appreciated by the twenty-three Sephardim, who considered

Pietersen's origins decidedly lower class—a Sephardic-Ashkenazic conflict that would billow in America for centuries to come. In any case, Pietersen's plea got the Jews an extension of time, but not much, for the record continues:

That the Jews shall, within twice twenty-four hours after date, pay according to contract what they lawfully owe, and in the meantime the furniture and whatever the petitioner has in his possession shall remain as security, without alienating the same.

During the two-day moratorium, the Jews' only hope was that help might somehow appear in the harbor from friends in Holland, even though the friends had no idea they were in America, and probably by this time assumed they had been lost at sea. When twice twenty-four hours had elapsed, the court was reconvened and de la Motthe appeared to demand the specific sum of 1,567 florins. He also placed in evidence a list of the Jews' property held on shipboard. The list was pathetically scant, consisting mostly of articles the Spanish pirates had not wanted. Through all this the woebegone little group remained silent.

What were their names, these unwelcomed and unwilling pioneers? The court records mention only one or two specific names, and spellings are offered capriciously. The court preferred to treat the “twenty-three souls, big and little” as a group, and in phraseology ominously reminiscent of the Expulsion Edict. Many records of America's first Jewish community are lost or incomplete and are complicated by Marrano aliases. But from what can be pieced together about them, it seems probable that the twenty-three consisted of six family heads—four men (with their wives) and two other women who in all likelihood were widows, since they were counted separately—and thirteen young people. The heads of these families were Asser Levy, Abraham Israel De Piza (or Dias), David Israel Faro, Mose Lumbroso, and—the two women—Judith (or Judica) Mercado (or De Mercado, or de Mereda) and Ricke (or Rachel) Nunes.

The court was clearly of two minds about their situation. The colony needed able-bodied men, and had made it a policy to welcome immigrants, indigent or wealthy. But the court could not ignore de la Motthe's fiercely worded petitions, and de la Motthe was eager to be on his way. The solution

was a compromise. The court offered the Jews a further delay, of four days this time, and then directed that if their debt was not settled the captain could “Cause to be sold, by public vendue, in the presence of the officer, the goods of Abraham Israel [De Piza] and Judica de Mereda, being the great debtor, and these not sufficing, he shall proceed in like manner with the others to the full acquittal of the debt and no further.”

By now the Jews and their predicament had become the talk of New Amsterdam, and the pros and cons of the case were being argued all over the colony. As a result, when the four days had passed, with no salvation in the form of a ship appearing, and when the Jews’ property was brought ashore and arrayed on the pier to be sold at auction, a group of New Netherlanders who had been defending the Jews arrived early, began buying up items at nominal prices, and then handed them over to their original owners. It was one of the earliest recorded examples of what might be called Christian charity in America. This was not, however, a development calculated to please M. de la Motthe, who, as soon as he learned what was happening, ordered the sale stopped. He then turned matters over to a young Dutch lawyer named Jan Martya.

Under normal procedure, petitioners before the Worshipful Court of Burgomasters had to bring their cases to the court on days when it was scheduled to be in session, and each case had to wait its turn. But a ruling did exist which stated that in return for “each member of the Council, five guilders; and for the Court Messenger two guilders,” the Worshipful Court would hold a special hurry-up session and forget about what other cases might be pending. It was a provision that obviously favored the rich, and Martya, acting in de la Motthe’s behalf, paid the necessary guilders and an “Extraordinary meeting” was promptly announced at the *Stadt Huys* (State House), which was actually a chamber over a taproom where “beer was sold by the whole can, but not in smaller quantities.” One gathers that beer had its place in the normal proceedings of the court.

All over again, the case against “David Israel and the other Jews” was recited, and Martya added in sterner tones:

Whereas their goods sold thus far by venue do not amount to the payment of their obligations, it is therefore requested that one or two of the said Jews be taken as principal which, according to the aforesaid contract or

obligation, cannot be refused. Therefore he hath taken David Israel and Moses Ambrosius* as principal debtors for the remaining balance, with request that the same be placed in confinement until the account be paid.

This, revealing that legal language has grown no less convoluted over the years, was the first time prison had been mentioned. And the Jews, who had no guilders with which to pay for their share of the court's attention, could do nothing but ask for the mercy of the court. But the court decreed:

... having weighed the petition of the plaintiff and seen the obligation wherein each is bound IN SOLIDUM for the full payment [we] have consented to the plaintiff's request to place the aforesaid persons under civil arrest (namely with the Provost Marshall) until they have made satisfaction.

It was not, however, a total victory for de la Motthe, because the decree contained a proviso that may have come as a surprise to him. The order sent the two men to debtor's prison only provided that "He, de la Motthe, shall previously answer for the board, which is fixed at 16 stivers per diem for each prisoner, and is ordered that for this purpose 40–50 guilders proceeding from the goods sold shall remain in the hands of the Secretary, together with the expenses of this special court." Collecting his money was becoming an increasingly expensive chore for de la Motthe.

With two men jailed and the sale resumed, the prospects for the twenty-three were discouraging. September passed, and October nights were growing chilly. Though there was scattered help from sympathetic residents of the little colony, the encampment by the river faced slow starvation. Then Solomon Pietersen—who had made himself the chief defender of the twenty-three—stepped to center stage again.

In the small print of the agreement the Jews had signed when taken aboard, Pietersen uncovered a helpful fact. The passage money was not owed to de la Motthe alone. The other officers, and even the crew, of the *Saint Charles* were entitled to a share. Armed with this, Pietersen went to each officer and sailor and, in individual pleas, asked each to wait for his money until the ship's next call the following year. Each would be paid then, he promised, and with full interest. To de la Motthe he pointed out that

the proceeds of the sale nearly equalled his personal share, and this he could keep. On October 26, 1654, the Worshipful Court declared:

Solomon Pietersen appeared in Court and exhibited a declaration from the attorney of the sailors, relative to the balance of the freight of the Jews, promising to wait until the arrival of the ship from Patria. Wherefore he requests to receive the monies still in the Secretary's hands for Rycke Nunes, whose goods were sold, over and above her own freight debt, in order to obtain with that money support for her. Whereupon was endorsed: Petitioner Solomon Pietersen as attorney was permitted to take, under security, the monies in Secretary's hands.

And so, after an ordeal of nearly two months, the settlers who had inadvertently become America's first "minority group" were free—or at least somewhat free—to make a living.

And they could practice their religion. With the boys over thirteen, there were probably enough males to form a minyan to celebrate the first Rosh Hashanah in America on September 12, 1654 (5415 according to the Hebrew calendar). Within a year, the congregation of Shearith Israel—"Remnant of Israel"—was founded. The settlers were not allowed a house of worship, but they could hold services in their own houses; a few years later, they were permitted to rent quarters for services. At first they were refused land for a cemetery but, by 1656, they had acquired "a little hook of land" for a burial ground. Its exact location is unknown. By 1682, the congregation was permitted to purchase the Chatham Square Cemetery, which exists today. It was not until 1730 that the congregation succeeded in erecting the first synagogue building in America, a tiny structure in Manhattan's Mill Street.

The parnas, or president, of the synagogue that year was Emily Nathan's great-great-great grandfather, as Aunt Ellie would remind the children. A Nathan—Emily's brother, Justice Edgar J. Nathan, Jr.—was parnas until his death in 1965. His son Edgar Nathan III now serves.

Today, New York families such as the Nathans, the Seixases, the Cardozos, and the Hendrickses—who are all able to locate the names of the earliest settlers far back in the tangled branches of their family trees—can view the settlers' accomplishments with a certain quiet pride. In the years

around the turn of the last century, when Mrs. William Astor was throwing her celebrated balls for the people Ward McAllister had labeled “the Four Hundred”—and when a later-arriving German-Jewish elite had begun high-hatting Mrs. Astor and calling itself “the One Hundred”—one of the little Nathans, no stranger to the family’s intense sense of hubris, asked his mother, “Who are *we*?” “We,” said Mrs. Nathan with a little smile, “are the Twenty-Three.”

* From Ashkenaz, a people mentioned in Genesis, who in medieval rabbinical literature became identified with the Germans.

* Probably Mose Lumbroso.

“THESE GODLESS RASCALS”

At the heart of the Jews’ early difficulties, and a factor that would continue to cause them grief for a number of years, was the openly hostile and anti-Semitic attitude of Governor Peter Stuyvesant. In the land where the Pilgrims, just a few years earlier, had come to find religious freedom, bigotry was no rarer, nor were its expressions much different, than today. At the height of the de la Motthe affair—on September 22, 1654—Stuyvesant had written to the headquarters of the Dutch West India Company in Amsterdam to say:

The Jews who have arrived would nearly all like to remain here, but learning that they (with their customary usury and deceitful trading with the Christians) were very repugnant to the inferior magistrates [members of the Worshipful Court] as also to the people having the most affection for you; the Deaconry also fearing that owing to their present indigence they might become a charge in the coming winter, we have, for the benefit of this weak and newly developing place and the land in general, deemed it useful to require them in a friendly way to depart; praying also most seriously in this connection, for ourselves as also for the general community of your worships, that the deceitful race—such hateful enemies and blasphemers of the name of Christ—be not allowed further to infect and trouble this new colony, to the detraction of your worships and the dissatisfaction of your worships’ most affectionate subjects.

Peter Stuyvesant, a harsh and despotic man, was a bigot in the classic sense. He had already been reprimanded by the company for his persecutions of Lutherans and Quakers in the colony, and he had made himself generally unpopular with everyone by his efforts to increase taxes and prevent the sale of liquor and firearms to the Indians. What was the basis of his distrust, even fear, of a handful of impoverished Jews? The charge of “usury” was a common one, and Jews had learned, in a grim way, to be amused by it. The ironic fact was that usury was invented by a seventeenth-century Dutch Christian, Salmasius, who published three books on the subject between 1638 and 1640 urging the adoption of usury as an economic tool. His views had been quickly adopted by most Christian, as well as Jewish, moneylenders. Among the Jews, meanwhile, were men who, in Brazil, had been respected businessmen, as they had been in Holland before that. There could have been no real reason to suppose they had come to New Amsterdam to indulge in anything dishonest.

There were, however, certain characteristics of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews that Christians found off-putting. The Sephardim were characterized by a certain dignity of manner, an implacable and unbroachable reserve. They possessed not a little of the Spanish temper. From early portraits we see their high-cheekboned, often haughty, faces. There was a sense of aloofness, of distance, about them that passed for arrogance or extreme self-pride. The records of the de la Motthe hearings all describe the Jews as sitting rigidly in their seats, saying nothing, retreated into the grandeur of silence. But Peter Stuyvesant’s attitude shows, more than anything else, that the spirit of the Inquisition had crept, in little ways, all over the world, and that the ancient superstitions and accusations against the Jews had followed it—that the Jews were sorcerers, ritual murderers of children, poisoners of wells, killers of Christ.

There were others who shared Stuyvesant’s views. The Reverend John Megapolensis, head of the Dutch Church in New Amsterdam, had, the same year as the Jews’ arrival, succeeded—with Stuyvesant’s full help—in denying the Lutherans permission to build their own church in Manhattan. A few months later, in a state of alarm, Megapolensis wrote to his archbishop in Holland:

Some Jews came from Holland last summer, in order to trade. Later a few Jews came upon the same ship as De Polhemius;* they were healthy but poor. It would have been proper that they should have been supported by their own people, but they have been at our charge, so that we have had to spend several hundred guilders for their support. They came several times to my house, weeping and bemoaning their misery. If I directed them to the Jewish merchants, they said they would not even lend them a few stivers. Some of them have come from Holland this spring. They report that still more of the same lot would follow, and then they would build here a synagogue. This causes among the congregation here a great deal of complaint and murmuring. These people have no other God than the unrighteous Mammon, and no other aim than to get possession of Christian property, and to win all other merchants by drawing all trade towards themselves. Therefore we request your Reverences to obtain from the Lords-Directors [of the West India Company] that these godless rascals, who are of no benefit to the country, but look at everything for their own profit, may be sent away from here. For as we have Papists, Mennonites and Lutherans among the Dutch; also many Puritans or Independents, and various other servants of Baal among the English under this Government, who conceal themselves under the name of Christians; it would create a still greater confusion if the obstinate and immovable Jews came to settle here. Closing I commend your Reverences with your families to the protection of God, who will bless us and all of you in the service of the divine word.

Though the Jews petitioned Megapolensis, it is unlikely that they came “weeping and bemoaning.” This seems quite out of character. The Jews, who had plenty to weep about and bemoan, and who were under no misapprehensions about the very limited degree of welcome they were being given, were not emotional but methodical in their approach to the problem. Early in 1655 they drafted and sent off a lengthy petition to the directors of the West India Company in Holland. This document is remarkable not only in its coolheadedness and tact, its diplomacy and relentless logic, but also for the clarity with which it defines the political and economic position of the Jews in western Europe in the middle of the seventeenth century.

The petition begins with a deferential salutation “To the Honorable Lords, Directors of the Chartered West India Company, Chamber of the City of Amsterdam” and proceeds to a detailing of the Jews’ specific grievances. Stuyvesant had refused to give them passports or to let them travel outside the settlement, making it impossible for them to trade. This, the petition points out, “if persisted in will result to the great disadvantage of the Jewish Nation. It also can be of no advantage to the Company, but rather damaging.” The petition reminded the directors that “The Jewish Nation in Brazil have at all times been faithful and have striven to guard and maintain that place, risking for the purpose their possessions and their blood.” Next the Jews pointed out the economic advantages to be gained by allowing settlers to disperse about the country. “Yonder land,” they wrote, “is extensive and spacious. The more ... people that go and live there, the better it is in regard to the payment of taxes which may be imposed there.” They reminded the “high illustrious mighty Lords” that in the past they had “always protected and considered the Jewish Nation as upon the same footing as all the inhabitants and burghers. Also it is conditioned in the treaty of perpetual peace with the King of Spain that the Jewish Nation shall also enjoy the same liberty as all other inhabitants of these lands.”

The petition then made its most telling point.

Your Honors should also please consider that many of the Jewish Nation are principal shareholders of the West India Company. They have always striven their best for the Company, and many of their Nation have also lost immense and great capital in its shares and obligations. The Company has consented that those who wish to populate the colony shall enjoy certain districts and land grants. Why should certain subjects of this state not be allowed to travel thither and live there? The French consent that the Portuguese Jews may traffic and live in Martinique, Christopher, and others of their territories.... The English also consent at the present time that the Portuguese and Jewish Nation may go from London and settle at Barbados, whither also some have gone.

The reply from Amsterdam was slow in coming, and the permission it gave was given begrudgingly. Clearly the directors shared some of Stuyvesant’s misgivings. But the reminder that there were Jewish

shareholders of importance in the company was what turned the vote in their favor. In their letter of instruction to Stuyvesant dated April 26, 1655, the directors said:

We would like to effectuate and fulfill your wishes and request that the territories should no more be allowed to be infected by people of the Jewish Nation, for we see therefrom the same difficulties which you fear, but after having weighed and considered the matter, we observe that this would be somewhat unreasonable and unfair, especially because of the considerable loss sustained by this nation, with others, in the taking of Brazil, as also because of the large amount of capital which they still have invested in the shares of this company. Therefore, after many deliberations we have finally decided and resolve to apostille [i.e., to note] upon a certain petition presented by said Portuguese Jews that these people may travel and trade to and in New Netherlands and live there and remain there, provided the poor among them shall not become a burden to the company or to the community, but be supported by their own nation. You will govern yourself accordingly.

One wonders whether, if the loss of Brazil had not driven the price of West India Company stock down, the directors would have been even this sympathetic. In any case, with this mealy-mouthed and decidedly reluctant verdict, the Jews gained their second important victory in the new land—only one of many more that were to come.

* Dominie Joannes Polhemius was a Dutch religious who had arrived in New Amsterdam aboard the *Saint Charles*. This letter confirms the fact that the twenty-three *Saint Charles* passengers were not technically the first Jews to set foot upon American soil.

6

LITTLE VICTORIES

In Holland, where so many of the better off and the intelligentsia had fled, the phoenix was adopted as the symbol of the Sephardic Jews, representing their rise from the ashes of the Inquisition. In the mid-seventeenth-century Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, however, a creature more symbolic of persistence would have had to be chosen—the tortoise, perhaps, because the story of the early years of the first Jewish families in Manhattan is one of endurance.

The chief enemy continued to be Peter Stuyvesant, who had called them “godless rascals.” A handful more had arrived by the spring of 1655 —“from the West Indies *and now from the Fatherland!*” Stuyvesant wrote with alarm, regarding the trickle of immigrants as something akin to an invasion. Among the newer arrivals joining the original twenty-three was one Abraham de Lucena. Though Mr. de Lucena clearly appears to have been some sort of leader in the little Sephardic community in New Amsterdam, his importance has since become more genealogical than historical, since such old New York families as the Nathans and the Hendrickses find in him a common ancestor. Not much is known about the first de Lucena. It was noted that he came to New Amsterdam from “the Fatherland”—or Holland—it is also recorded that he could “barely speak Dutch.” One assumes, then, that he was a recent escapee from the Inquisition, and that he had not tarried in Holland long during his journey from Spain.

Without a democratic government or a clear body of laws, rules in the settlement were subject to wide interpretation, and Stuyvesant made full use

of this latitude. In 1655, the “Jewish problem,” in Stuyvesant’s eyes, loomed so large—there were perhaps twenty families—that he announced that Jews were not wanted as guards or soldiers for the city. This was a devious measure because, in effect, it denied them the right to stand guard over their own homes, which in those days was the most important duty a member of the civil guard had to perform. Stuyvesant based his ruling on what he claimed to be the unwillingness of the colony’s regular soldiers “to be fellow-soldiers with the aforesaid nation and to be on guard with them in the same guard house,” and he therefore declared “to prevent further discontent” that Jews were to “remain exempt from ... general training and guard duty.” He added the galling statement that, for “the privilege of remaining exempt,” each male Jew between the ages of sixteen and sixty would have to pay a tax of 65 stivers—about a dollar in present currency—per month. It was the Jew tax of Europe all over again.

More anti-Semitic legislation followed. In the summer of 1655, Stuyvesant announced that Jews would not be allowed to own their own houses. At a public auction in December a young man named Salvador Dandrada bought a small house, in either defiance or ignorance of this order, at what is now the east end of Wall Street. When it was discovered that Dandrada was Jewish, the purchase was declared annulled and the house placed on the auction block all over again, to be sold to someone else.

Laborious petitions were written to the Dutch West India Company in Holland, itemizing the wrongs and injustices the Jews had suffered, and these were dispatched on their slow journey across the sea. The four principal negotiators were now Salvador Dandrada, Jacob Henriques, Abraham de Lucena, and Joseph d’Acosta and, again, it was the weight of the shares in the company owned by these four men—d’Acosta particularly—that provided them their best leverage. It was enough, at length, to bring about a letter to Stuyvesant from his superiors. The directors told the governor that they had learned “with displeasure” that he had forbidden Jews “to trade at Fort Orange and South River, and also the purchase of real estate, which is allowed here in this country without any difficulty.” The directive did not give the Jews complete equality, however. They were still “not to establish themselves as mechanics ... nor allowed to have open retail shops.”

The unwillingness to let Jews enter retailing was based on an interesting economic theory, a holdover from the old world. In seventeenth-century Holland it was thought that Jews, because of their supposed “talent” at international and wholesale trade, should be channeled into these activities, for the good of the country. It is certainly true that contributions of Dutch Jews to international finance helped balance Holland’s economic position in relation to her competitors—England, Portugal, and Spain. It was claimed that retailing “distracted” Jews from their more important international business, and the same focus of their attention was deemed necessary in New Amsterdam as well. Here, after all, trade between the colonies was becoming increasingly important. Why Jews were not wanted as “mechanics” is, however, not entirely clear.

Jews were also ordered to carry on their religion “in all quietness ... within their houses, for which end they must ... endeavor to build their houses close together in a convenient place”—in other words, in a ghetto of sorts. At the same time, the directors rather sternly told Stuyvesant that they expected their orders from now on executed “punctually and with more respect.” It was another victory, and led the way a year later, to Jews being given full rights as burghers, or citizens, of New Amsterdam.

In 1664, the Dutch ceded their American colony to the British, New Amsterdam became New York, and the climate changed again. Instead of Peter Stuyvesant, there was a reactionary government in England to deal with. The restrictions continued. Jews were not permitted to indulge in retail trade, nor could they worship in public. It wasn’t long, though, before these rules became impossible to enforce. The Jews were becoming too important an element in the colony to be kept out of the mainstream of New York commercial life. They were soon to be a political force to be reckoned with as well. Moses Levy, who operated a small but profitable general store in Manhattan, became the first Jew in America to be elected to a public office when he was chosen” Constable of the South Ward.” Mr. Levy, however, was not impressed by the honor and announced that he did not wish to serve, preferring to pay the five-pound penalty for not serving rather than taking on this time-consuming and low-paying job.

Moses Levy was also one of New York’s earliest philanthropists, and in his giving he was laudably ecumenical. In 1711, he was one of seven New York Jews who contributed to a fund for the building of the steeple of the

original Trinity Church, the landmark that today stands rebuilt at the head of Wall Street. In 1727, the affluence of Mr. Levy led to a minor misfortune, and to another “first” for Jews that was somewhat less auspicious. Moses Susman, also Jewish, robbed Mr. Levy of “gold, silver, money bags, rings &c,” and was caught red-handed. Little is known of Susman, whose name suggests that he was German, except that he spoke no English and possessed “no goods or Chattles Lands or Tenements.” The controversy between Susman and Levy may have been an instance of the hostilities that lingered between the older-arrived Sephardim and the newer-arriving Jews from northern Europe. In any case, Mr. Levy decided to deal sternly with the thief, and the court, finding him guilty, demanded the sentence that was in those days customary for men convicted of this crime—that Susman be “hanged by the neck till he be dead, and that he be hanged on Wednesday the twelfth of July between the hours of ten and eleven in the forenoon.” Thus Moses Susman achieved the dubious honor of being the first Jew in America to be executed. The record notes that a Mr. Noble was ordered paid “two pounds Current Money of New York” for erecting the gallows.

By the early 1700’s, two families, the Levys and the de Lucenas, had become easily the two most prominent Jewish families in New York. Abraham de Lucena, who started out trading with the Indians for pelts, soon became one of New York’s most important fur merchants and was among the major contributors when donors were sought for the purchase “in trust for the Jewish Nation” of the first Jewish Cemetery in the New Bowery. His son,* Abraham Haim de Lucena, was the second rabbi of the Shearith Israel congregation and was able to afford a large and comfortable house of stone—a sign of advanced status—with a view of the harbor.

Asser Levy, a “connection” of Moses Levy, offered a similar success story. Six years after reaching Manhattan on the *Saint Charles*, he had obtained a butcher’s license. By 1678 he had prospered sufficiently to build a slaughterhouse at the water gate at the bottom of Wall Street and, adjacent to this, he also opened a tavern. Levy’s Tavern was a popular spot because the proprietor was a cordial fellow who also extended a bit of credit here and there. Levy’s substantial house stood nearby. In 1671, Asser Levy loaned the Lutherans enough money to build their first American church. He owned the land on which the first synagogue was built, and helped support the congregation by charging them no rent. When Asser Levy died,

in 1682, his estate was valued at the then princely sum of £53 in cash, plus considerable land and a large inventory of goods in which he traded as a sideline, including one otter skin and 504 Jew's harps.

An even more important accomplishment of Asser Levy was that he had managed to form the first business partnership with a non-Jew that has been recorded in America, taking into the slaughterhouse, tavern and Jew's harp business one Garret Janson Roos. Since there were only six licensed butchers in the city, each was required to take an oath of office. Mr. Roos took his oath "on the faith of a Christian." Mr. Levy, however, took "the oath that Jews are accustomed to take," and was also granted special permission "to be excused from killing hogs, as his religion does not allow him to do it." Mr. Roos became head of the hog-killing department.

It must have seemed as though the golden era Jews had enjoyed in medieval Spain was about to return in the new world. Other families were rising to wealth and prominence and, with these, respectability. The Gomez family, wheat merchants, were rivaling the Levys and de Lucenas in importance, to the extent that when a Gomez son married Rebecca de Lucena, Abraham Haim de Lucena's daughter, it was considered a match of two leading American families, of the highest social order. Gomezes also married Levys and de Leons and Nuneses and Hendrickses. In 1729, the Gomezes became the first Jews to advertise their products on any sort of scale, and the tiny weekly New York *Gazette* carried the following item:

All persons who shall have occasion for good Stone-Lime next spring or summer, may be supplied with what Quantity they shall have occasion for by Lewis Gomez in the city of New-York, at a reasonable Price.

"You notice," one of the Nathans commented in connection with this advertisement—for Nathans are descended from Gomezes, too—"what perfect English our family used, even then."

* Possibly his grandson; the genealogical line is blurred at this point.

“GOMEZ, THE ONIONS BEGIN TO SMELL!”

“They walk with heads held high,” a contemporary writer said of the members of New York’s tiny (perhaps a hundred families in a city of ten thousand) eighteenth-century Jewish community. “These haughtiest of Chosen People must deem themselves the princes of the earth.” They may also have walked with a certain feeling of relief. Because, while families like the Gomezes were finding it possible to prosper in the new world, dark and frightening rumors drifted back to them from across the ocean—tales that their rabbis told them in the synagogue of what Jews who had elected to remain in Spain and Portugal were undergoing. Deep in the background of every American Jew’s conscience, throughout those Inquisitional years, was an awareness of what was happening to his relatives and coreligionists in the land the Jews called the Sepharad. It was a frustrating awareness, too, because those who had escaped the Inquisition could do absolutely nothing to help those who had not.

And, once the Inquisition had begun, there seemed to be no way to stop it. It grew like a malignant disease for nearly four hundred years, and when at last it died, its death was slow and hard and painful. It was founded in 1479, and the last public burning took place in 1781, but even then the Inquisition was not over. Executions continued under the Holy Office until as recently as 1826. The last man to hang was a young Valencian, who, in public prayer, was said to have uttered—witnesses swore they had heard

him—a blasphemous “Praise be to God,” instead of the required “Ave Maria.” His body swung in the *plaza mayor* for all to see.

It was not, in fact, until July 15, 1834, that the Spanish Inquisition was officially abolished. But the Expulsion Edict remained firmly in effect, and for years after that there were repeated urgings from the press and from the pulpit for “the restoration of our beloved Inquisition.” Even by the 1890’s, it seems—while Americans were dancing gaily at Sherry’s and laughing at the antics of Diamond Jim Brady—Spanish zealots were clamoring to have their Inquisition back, nor had the country seemed to have grasped the fact that, in its long and arduous process, the Inquisition had destroyed Spain utterly, robbed it of all the bright promise it had once had in the years of the *conquistadores*.

The Inquisition would not die, even though it was based on an unworkable concept. For it set about with fanaticism to perform a labor that could not be done, to erase something that could not be erased, to create something that could not be created, and to solve a problem to which there was no solution, final or even partial. The Inquisition was, by the nature of the visions that bore it, endless, and so, when the end came, Spain lay spent and exhausted and powerless.

Apologists for the Inquisition, and defenders of Isabella, who inaugurated it, point out that the idea was not original with Spain, that Spain’s version was based on an earlier Italian effort, and that the punishments it inflicted were no more brutal than those in other countries of the period. The technique of expulsion was not new. In England in 1290 the Jews were ordered out on the grounds that they tried to lure recent converts to Christianity back to “the vomit of Judaism.” It has been said that the Inquisition was necessary because Jews had infiltrated Spanish life to such an extent that they had to be removed and that, from the beginning, it had been clear to the Jew that conversion would free him from the possibility of persecution. Also, it has been argued, Jews who were honest about their Judaism were never murdered, tortured, imprisoned, or mistreated in any way. Admission to being a Jew merely resulted in a man’s being stripped of his property and bank account, and sent out of the country. But the terrible fact of the Inquisition, regardless of its origins and methods, was that for all its protracted length it was a massive failure. If its aim was to create a

homogeneous Spain, its result was the opposite. It tore the country into warring and irreconcilable factions.

The *Conversos*, or New Christians, quickly reoccupied important positions almost identical to those they had held as Jews, those of physicians, lawyers, financial advisers to the nobility, jobs for which training or learning qualified them. Instead of a Jewish conspiracy, it now seemed like a New Christian conspiracy. Meanwhile, the actual strength of their new faith, the fullness of the conversion, was under heavy suspicion—and for good reason. The man baptized at sword point was often less than sincere. When *Converso* doctors lost patients, the old accusations were muttered, and when the government attempted to take untrained men, who happened to be Old Christians, and turn them overnight into brilliant physicians, the results were equally disastrous. In the somewhat lowlier occupation of tax collector, more ironies appeared. When Old Christians took up these tasks they were looked down upon for performing “Jewish” chores, and soon were accused of being Jews in Old Christian clothing. Of this confused situation, a seventeenth-century writer complained:

Formerly all who applied themselves to the gathering of taxes were Jews and people of low origin; yet now, when they are not so, people look down upon them as Hebrews, even though they be Old Christians and of noble descent.

Between Old Christian and New there grew an unbridgeable gulf of dislike and distrust. A number of ex-Jews, obviously supposing that the move would make them safer from the Inquisition, chose clerical careers and some of them rose to positions of importance in the Church. But even the Church’s servants were not spared from suspicion that they were secret Judaizers, and before the Inquisition was over, hundreds of nuns, monks, and friars were marched to the stake. At one remarkable auto-da-fé in Coimbra, which lasted over two days and in which over two hundred suspected Jews were involved, the victims included nuns, friars, curates, priests, canons, professors, vicars, and an unfrocked Franciscan who stubbornly refused to confess that he was not a devout Catholic and was therefore burned alive as punishment.

The doctrine of *limpieza*, or purity of blood, was impossible to enforce from the beginning, with so much of the Spanish nobility already “tainted” with Jewish blood, and so it quickly became nothing more than a tool—a powerful tool, for it was an instrument of blackmail—which any noble could use in dealing with his enemies, or which the Church could use in its endless struggle with the nobility, or which one order within the Church could use against another. In 1560, for example, Cardinal Francisco Mendoza y Bobadilla, annoyed that two relatives were not admitted to a particular military order, pettishly and vengefully turned over to Philip II a document, later called the *Tizón de la Nobleza España* (the Blot on the Nobility of Spain), in which he “proved” that the entire nobility of Spain was of Jewish descent. Apparently the Cardinal’s proofs were convincing, for the *Tizón* became a standard Inquisitional reference book, used right up into the nineteenth century, hauled out whenever new victims were needed, republished, and amended at each publisher’s whim—many times. For a price, of course, one could have one’s name removed from its list.

Meanwhile, *Conversos* who had been converted under duress and who were bitter and resentful of the Church became a faction of their own. Outwardly labeled Marranos, they called themselves, in private, *Anusim*, “the Forced Ones,” and continued to practice Judaism.

Soon there was agitated talk of “the *Converso* danger” and “the Marrano peril,” and *Conversos*, in terror of their lives, fanned the flames by turning informer on Marranos as well as on each other. In Seville, one of the main centers of *Conversos*, the New Christians, led by Diego de Susan, a wealthy merchant, decided to resist the Inquisition. Diego’s beautiful daughter, however, disclosed this secret to her Old Christian lover, who passed it on to the Inquisitors, and many distinguished *Conversos* of Seville were tried, convicted, and sent to the stake.

It was an endless whirlpool of hate and fear. A list was circulated of the thirty-seven signs by which one could recognize a Judaizer. With dismay, it was quickly noted that a number of the thirty-seven signs applied to everybody. There is no way of telling how many Marranos there were at any given point in time, how many had fled, how many remained. Marranos, it was said—and no doubt it was true—worked harder for the Inquisition than most Christians as a way of preserving their disguise. How could you tell the traditional zeal of the fresh convert from what might be

smoke screen and deception? There was no way, and the extrazealous *Converso* was as much under suspicion and surveillance as the indifferent one. And thus the Inquisition revealed its essential dilemma: It was suspicious even of itself.

When the Inquisitor of Seville wanted to locate the homes of Marranos, he went up on a hilltop on a Saturday and pointed out homes whose chimneys were not smoking. “You will not see smoke rising from any of them,” he said, “in spite of the severe cold. They have no fires because it is the Sabbath.”

As the Inquisition’s power increased, so did the number of fleeing Marranos, and the number of Judaizers discovered and brought to trial. At the Inquisitional tribunal in Toledo, between the years 1575 and 1610, 175 convicted Judaizers appeared for sentencing. Later, between 1648 and 1794, the number had jumped to 659. Though Judaizing was not the only crime the Inquisitional courts dealt with, it was by far the most popular one. Also punished were those found guilty of being secret Moors (or Moriscos), those guilty of blasphemy, witchcraft, heresy, solicitation in confession, and “those who do not consider fornication sinful.” It is interesting to note that while the number of convicted Judaizers rose sharply, the number of persons accused of condoning fornication declined—from 264 in the years 1575 to 1610 to a mere five in 1648 to 1794.

The prisons of Spain filled until there were enough prisoners to hold an auto-da-fé—literally, an “act of the faith”—and these autos quickly became a tremendously popular form of public entertainment. Today, the phrase conjures up scenes of human victims tied to rafters and fed into blazing pyres while a bloodthirsty populace screamed approval. In actuality, the autos-da-fé were reasonably sedate affairs, conducted as public expressions of religiosity and pious justice. Fidel Fita, a fifteenth-century Spaniard, describes the ceremony that was held on Sunday, February 12, 1486, and we see that it was a restrained occasion:

All the reconciled went in procession, to the number of 750 persons, including both men and women ... from the church of St. Peter Martyr ... the men were all together in a group, bareheaded and unshod, and since it was extremely cold they were told to wear soles under their feet which were otherwise bare; in their hands were unlit candles. The women were together

in a group, their heads uncovered and their faces bare, unshod like the men and with candles. Among these were many prominent men in high office. With the bitter cold and the dishonour and disgrace they suffered from the great number of spectators (since a great many people from outlying districts had come to see them), they went along howling loudly and weeping and tearing their hair, no doubt more for the dishonour they were suffering than from any offence they had committed against God. Thus they went in tribulation through the streets along which the Corpus Christi procession goes, until they came to the cathedral. At the door of the church were two chaplains who made the sign of the cross on each one's forehead saying, "Receive the sign of the Cross, which you denied and lost through being deceived." Then they went into the church until they arrived at a scaffolding erected by the new gate, and on it were the father inquisitors. Nearby was another scaffolding on which stood an altar at which they said mass and delivered a sermon. After this a notary stood up and began to call each one by name, saying, "Is——here?" The penitent raised his candle and said "Yes." There in public they read all the things in which he had judaized. The same was done for the women. When this was over they were publicly allotted penance and ordered to go in procession for six Fridays, disciplining their body with scourges of hempcord, barebacked, unshod and bareheaded; and they were to fast for those six Fridays. It was also ordered that all the days of their lives they were to hold no public office such as *alcalde*, *alguacil*, *regidor* or *jurado*, or be public scribes or messengers, and that those who held these offices were to lose them. And that they were not to become money-changers, shopkeepers or grocers or hold any official post whatever. And they were not to wear silk or scarlet or coloured cloths or gold or silver or pearls or coral or any jewels. Nor could they stand as witnesses. And they were ordered if they relapsed, that is if they fell into the same error again, and resorted to any of the aforementioned things, they would be condemned to the fire. And when all this was over they went away at two o'clock in the afternoon.

Henry Kamen, one of the best historians of the Inquisition, has pointed out that two o'clock is the traditional Spanish hour for lunch, and that 750 transgressors "reconciled" back into the ways of righteousness was most certainly a good morning's work. As the Inquisition progressed, and the

number of penitents grew, the autos-da-fé became longer, often stretching into the night and sometimes going on for days. Burnings, however, seldom took place in public in the centers of town, and were performed in the outskirts of cities, away from the eyes of the morbid or curious. Also, since so many prisoners died in confinement before being sentenced, a good proportion of the victims were burned in effigy only.

“Scourging” was a more popular form of punishment. The prisoner was ordered to “discipline his body” with whips, or often given added discipline by being lashed to a mule and “whipped through the streets” by the executioner. In these cases, the public was urged to participate by pelting the victim with stones and garbage. How grateful the prisoner must have been to have returned to the True Faith. Children and old people were subject to identical punishment—a teen-age youth sentenced to the same number of lashings as a seventy-year-old woman. The number of lashings prescribed varied according to the offense, but a hundred was the usual minimum and two hundred the maximum.

An even more bizarre—though effective—device of punishment was the *sanbenito*, a corruption of the words *saco benito*, or “holy bag.” An odd garment, cut rather like a poncho, the *sanbenito* fitted over the head and hung to the knees. It was usually of yellow, the color of cowardice, and decorated with crosses, flames, devils, and other reminders of torture. With the *sanbenito* was worn a tall pointed headpiece, similar to a dunce’s cap. A reformed heretic might be required to wear this strange-looking outfit for anywhere from a few months to the rest of his life, and any relapse to his old Judaizing ways while condemned to the *sanbenito* meant, instantly, the stake. In addition to the humiliation the *sanbenito* inflicted upon its wearers, there was the further disgrace that when a penitent was permitted to remove his sack it was displayed, with his name attached to it, in the cathedral “in perpetuity.”

Tomás de Torquemada, the first Inquisitor General of the Inquisition, was himself of Jewish descent. He was among those who urged Ferdinand and Isabella to establish the Inquisition in the first place. Both monarchs held him in high regard. The queen consulted Torquemada often and sought his advice on religious matters. He visited her frequently at her palace in Segovia in the years before she took the throne, and he became her personal confessor. Later, he became Ferdinand’s as well, and must have listened to

some startling accounts if Ferdinand confessed all. Torquemada was known for his thoroughness and single-mindedness. He was called “a scourge of heresy, a light of Spain, the saviour of his country, and an honor to his Order,” which was the Dominican. Popes Sixtus IV and Alexander VI praised Torquemada for his dedication to ridding Spain of Jews and Moors, and spoke admiringly of the smooth efficiency of his courts.

A strange, austere, overpowering figure of a man, he comes down through history to us as a compound of myths and contradictions. It was said that he never traveled unless he was accompanied by 250 armed guards and fifty horsemen, that he was pathologically afraid of the dark and could not sleep unless an attendant was at his side to rouse him from his terrible nightmares. It was also said that he never ate unless the horn of a unicorn and the tongue of a scorpion were placed beside his plate. Considering the supply of unicorns’ horns in fifteenth-century Spain, he must have dined little. He was praised for his extreme asceticism, yet a portrait of him by a contemporary painter depicts him as a full-faced, dark-complexioned, oddly worldly-looking *bon vivant*. One could describe his face as decidedly Semitic in cast, and this may have had something to do with his attitudes.

It was he, whose own blood was “impure,” who first introduced the doctrine of *limpieza* into a Dominican monastery, the one that he built in Avila and dedicated to Saint Thomas Aquinas. This cold and beautiful building, addressing serene courtyards and gardens, built with money extracted from the victims of his Inquisition, is a major tourist attraction in Avila today. Torquemada’s standards were said to be utterly unimpeachable. In 1484 his pope, Sixtus IV, wrote a letter congratulating him for having “directed your zeal to those matters which contribute to the praise of God and the utility of the orthodox faith.” He had a violent temper, and was not even afraid of speaking imperiously to his king and queen. According to one account, Ferdinand and Isabella were offered a ransom of 30,000 ducats by a group of Jews. The king and queen were tempted, and summoned Torquemada for an opinion. When he heard what they suggested, Torquemada is said to have torn his crucifix from his breast, flung it on the table in front of their majesties, and shouted, “Will you, like Judas, betray your Lord for money?”

As the Inquisition progressed over the tortured centuries, it was not always so incorruptible. If the amount of the bribe sufficiently exceeded the

amount that could be obtained through simple confiscation, the king was usually willing to listen. In 1602, a group of ex-Jews offered Philip III a present of 1,860,000 ducats, plus handsome cash gifts to each of the royal ministers, if a pardon was issued to “judaizers of their nation for all past offences.” And there was more, the king was told, where that came from. The *Conversos* openly admitted to a hoard of wealth amounting to over 80 million ducats held in a secret hiding place. This offer, more than sixty times the amount that enraged Torquemada, resulted in the issuance of a papal decree of pardon, and 410 prisoners were released from the Inquisition.

Torquemada ruled that those who steadfastly refused to renounce their Judaism and to reembrace the Church must die by fire. Only the penitents were given lesser punishments. The results were some extraordinary cases of martyrdom. One of the greatest was that of Don Lope de Vera, who appears to have become actually unhinged by his zeal to be a Jew even though he had not a drop of Jewish blood in him. He had studied Hebrew and become a pro-Jewish fanatic. Denounced and turned over to the Inquisition by his own brother, Don Lope repeatedly declared to the Inquisitors that he wanted to become a Jew. He circumcised himself in his prison cell and stated that he had renamed himself Judah the Believer. While being led to the stake he chanted Hebrew prayers. He was burned alive.

Torquemada’s successor as Grand Inquisitor was Diego Deza. Until he took his post he had been known as a quiet and scholarly man, a friend and patron of Columbus. Like Torquemada, he was of Jewish extraction. He far outdistanced his predecessor when it came to savagery, and under his leadership the Inquisition became more wanton and ferocious than ever before. In 1500 a Marrano woman “of exalted rank” who considered herself a prophetess was arrested at Herrera. Immediately this was seized upon as an excuse for an enormous auto-da-fé. After months of planning, it was held at Toledo and the woman and thirty-eight of her followers—all of them women—were burned. The next day, sixty-seven more—again all women—suffered the same fate. Under Diego Deza, possession of a trace of Jewish blood was enough to call for execution. The archdeacon de Castro, whose mother was from an ancient Old Christian family, was sentenced, made to perform public penance, and had his considerable fortune

confiscated, simply because his father had been a *Converso*. At one point, 107 people were burned alive; they were said to have been in a church while a sermon containing pro-Jewish sentiments was being preached.

The excesses of the Inquisition were reaching such heights that the captain of Córdoba complained that the Inquisitors “were able to defame the whole kingdom, to destroy without God or justice, a great part of it, slaying and robbing and violating maids and wives, to the great dishonor of the Christian religion.”

Complaints of atrocities began to reach royal ears and, in 1505, Philip and Juana—the daughter of Isabella—ordered Inquisitional activities halted until they should return from Flanders. Then Philip suddenly died, leaving things in Juana’s somewhat unsteady hands. Known as Juana la Loca, or Joan the Mad, she stayed, mute and uncommunicative, beside her dead husband’s casket during a long macabre journey back across the face of Europe to Madrid. Periodically, Juana would order the casket opened and she would embrace the decaying corpse. While succession was being disputed, the Inquisition was resumed and continued on its dismal course.

Since “reconciled” heretics were being given, they were assured, the gift of eternal life, it was frequently argued that the kindest thing that could be done for a fresh Christian convert was to speed him, with as little to-do as possible, out of this world and into the next before he had had a chance to change his mind. From the pen of an Inquisitor who witnessed the auto-da-fé of Logroño in 1719 we have this chilling account of an accused Judaizer who “with perfect serenity,” said:

“I will convert myself to the faith of Jesus Christ,” words which he had not been heard to utter until then. This overjoyed all the religious who began to embrace him with tenderness and gave infinite thanks to God ... a learned religious of the Franciscan Order asked him, “In what law do you die?” He turned and looked him in the eye and said, “Father, I have already told you that I die in the faith of Jesus Christ.” This caused great pleasure and joy among all, and the Franciscan, who was kneeling down, arose and embraced the criminal. All the others did the same with great satisfaction, giving thanks for the infinite goodness of God ... the criminal saw the executioner, who had put his head out from behind the stake, and asked

him, “Why did you call me a dog before?” The executioner replied, “Because you denied the faith of Jesus Christ, but now you have confessed, we are brothers, and if I have offended you by what I said, I beg your pardon on my knees.” The criminal forgave him gladly, and the two embraced.

And desirous that the soul which had given so many signs of conversion should not be lost, I went round casually behind the stake to where the executioner was, and gave him the order to strangle him immediately.... When it was certain that he was dead, the executioner was ordered to set the four corners of the pyre to the brushwood and charcoal that had been piled up ... it began to burn ... the flames rising swiftly ... when the cords binding the criminal had been burnt off he fell through the open trap-door into the pyre and his whole body was reduced to ashes....

Such demonstrations of “the infinite goodness of God” had, over the years, their desired effect. Even *Converso* families who had been converted with extreme reluctance became, after three or four generations, thoroughly Christianized. An elder might privately consider himself still a Jew, and continue secretly to practice his religion and honor its holy days. But there was a reluctance to pass Judaism on to children for fear of placing them in the Inquisition’s relentless path. Often, by the time a child was old enough to be safely told that he was Jewish, he had already been educated to the dogma of another faith and another ritual. Thus the *Conversos* became, gradually, what they were supposed to be: Christian converts.

But the Inquisition was never able to stamp out completely the Jewish faith in Spain and Portugal. Marranos continued to meet in secret places, clearings in woods or cellars of houses, to celebrate the Sabbath and holy days. Their lives involved continuous stealth and deception and fear. How many were there? There is no way of telling. Throughout the provinces of Toledo, Estremadura, Andalusia, and Murcia, it was said in 1488 that of the converts “hardly any are true Christians, as is well known in all Spain,” and Hernando de Pulgar, himself a *Converso*, testified that there were “thousands” of secret Jews practicing their religion in Toledo alone. Three hundred years later, in 1787, Joseph Townsend reported after traveling through Spain:

Even to the present day both Mahometans and Jews are thought to be numerous in Spain, the former among the mountains, the latter in all great cities. Their principal disguise is more than common zeal in external conformity to all the precepts of the Church; and the most apparently bigoted, not only of the clergy, but of the inquisitors themselves, are by some persons suspected to be Jews.

The Marranos gradually altered certain aspects of their ritual. After all, for the appearance of things it was necessary that they attend Catholic masses, and over the years Catholic practices made their inevitable way into Marrano Judaism. For instance, Marranos knelt rather than stood in prayer, and prayers were recited rather than chanted. No prayer books were kept, for they could be used as evidence, and Talmudic doctrine and lore were passed along verbally from one generation to the next. Marranos generally abstained from pork. They had secret Biblical names, which they used only among each other. Catholic wedding ceremonies were required, and a private Jewish wedding would be held afterward. More emphasis was placed on fasting than on feasting, and elaborate measures were resorted to in order to keep a Marrano's Christian servants from discovering that a fast was going on. Servants might be sent out on sudden errands at mealtimes; in their absence, plates were greased and dirtied to make it appear that the meal had taken place. A favorite device was to stage a family quarrel just before mealtime. By prearrangement, one member of the family would run out into the street in a feigned fit of rage, and the others would run after him to try to cajole him. When the quarrel was over, everyone would be too emotionally exhausted to eat anything.

The ancestors of Lewis Gomez, New York merchant and advertiser of "good Stone-Lime," appear to have been somewhat luckier than most Inquisitional Jewish families. Because of their services to a series of Spanish royal houses, Gomezes had been able successfully to remain in Spain long after Ferdinand and Isabella's Expulsion Edict. The Gomezes were connected by marriage to the great Santangel family, Marranos who, before their claimed conversion, had been named Ginillo. The Santangels, with their wealth and power and vast land holdings in Aragon, were natural targets of the Inquisition. Jaime Martin de Santangel was burned in 1488;

Doñosa de Santangel six months later. Simon de Santangel and his wife, Clara, betrayed by their own son, were burned in Lérida in 1490. A more understandable betrayal occurred when one of the daughters of Luis de Santangel, along with her lover, was turned over to the Inquisition by her husband. A particularly grisly Inquisitional episode took place in Granada in 1491 when Alfonso Gomez, his wife, the former Violante de Santangel, and her brother, Gabriel de Santangel, were all posthumously condemned of heresy and their families exhumed and burned in public.

Perhaps the Gomez tradition of being men of deeds and few words helped them survive the Inquisition for as many generations as they did. As a family, the Gomezes over the centuries have been both industrious and brainy. It appears to have been Gomez brain power, rather than real estate, that made Gomezes so popular and useful to a series of Spanish kings and queens. In any case, Isaac Gomez, born in Madrid in 1620, had developed such a skill with deeds—particularly money deeds—that he was made financial adviser to the king, following a family tradition. He was one of the king's great favorites.

The king at this time was the melancholy Philip IV, three-time great-grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, and great-great-grandson (on both his father's and his mother's side) of Juana la Loca, who, through the entanglements of royal intermarriage, turned up three more times in the king's family tree as his great-great-*great* grandmother. A heavy inheritance of her madness had fallen to him. This king was the father of the pathetic incompetent who was to be the last Hapsburg king, Carlos II, called Carlos the Bewitched. Philip himself was once suspected of being the victim of black witchcraft.

This also is the king we see in so many Velázquez portraits—regally astride his horse or standing imperiously in lace and ruffles, clutching his huge plumed hat, with a look of disdain on his far from handsome face with its heavy-lidded eyes, large nose, handlebar moustache, and the inevitable underslung Hapsburg jaw, which his son inherited to such an extreme extent that he could not chew his food. The king was a profligate and relentless womanizer, and his court was haunted by furies, real and imagined, from his frail and mentally retarded son to his belief that devils crept frightfully into the royal bedchamber and had secret intercourse with the queen. Quite obviously, the king was a man who needed a financial adviser, and Don

Isaac Gomez (who must have used another Christian name in public) filled the bill perfectly.

It is an indication of the persistence of the Gomez family that they had been able to survive nearly a century and a half of Inquisition since the Expulsion Edict as secret Jews. It is also clear that the king, and probably others of his court, knew the Gomez secret. In any case, it suited Philip to protect Gomez from the Inquisition, and in return Gomez honored his king in faithful fashion. When Philip's sister married Louis XIV of France, Isaac Gomez named his firstborn son Louis Moses Gomez, in honor of his monarch's new brother-in-law. Though Philip's own son would one day preside over one of the most ferocious autos-da-fé in history, Philip himself was of a gentler nature, tortured by self-doubt, convinced that his adulteries and promiscuity—over which he felt he had no control—were to blame for the ills that beset Spain. He once wrote: "These evil events have been caused by your sins and mine in particular. I believe that God our Lord is angry and irate with me and my realms on account of many sins, and particularly on account of mine...."

King Philip had promised Isaac that if the officers of the Inquisition ever seemed to have come too close for comfort, and if the king heard of it before Isaac, the king would issue him a coded warning. At dinner he would say to him, "Gomez, the onions begin to smell."

The day came. Unfortunately, by the time the king's message reached him, there was time only to get Isaac's wife and son smuggled out of the country. Remaining behind to wind up his affairs, Isaac was arrested and thrown into prison. It was several years before he was able successfully to bribe his way out, and by then his friend the king was dead. He was forced to take a familiar route, over the Pyrenees into France, where he joined his family.

In 1685 the Edict of Nantes was revoked, there was an outbreak of religious disturbances in France, and a new mood of reaction was spreading across the Continent. Isaac prudently decided to move on to England, where he also had friends and family. In London, thanks to his connections, Isaac Gomez was granted a "letter of denization," which literally made him a denizen, or free man of the country. It was an important document for an alien to have, and one not customarily given to Jews. It indicated that Gomezes were persons of privilege, with full rights of British citizenship,

except that of holding public office. Despite these advantages, however, Isaac's son Louis—a young man now—decided that he wanted to seek his fortune in America.

When word reached New York that a member of the exalted Gomez clan was on his way, there was a considerable stir within the little community of Sephardim—particularly among the mothers of unmarried and eligible daughters, who immediately began receiving instructions on how to treat a Gomez. It was said that the Gomezes were so grand that they still used their titles, and had to be addressed as “your grace,” and “your ladyship.” (This was true; they did.) Young Louis Gomez, however, disappointed the mothers by stopping enroute in Jamaica, where he met, by a prearrangement with her family, the daughter of another high-placed Sephardic family, Esther Marques, and married her. The young couple arrived in New York in 1696.

Louis Gomez (in America he anglicized his first name to Lewis) set himself up in a small store in lower Manhattan selling general merchandise. But soon he saw how important wheat was becoming to the young colony. Wheat, grown in what is now suburban Westchester County, as well as in the West Indies, was being traded back and forth across the Atlantic and was a highly profitable item. Concentrating on the wheat trade, Louis was soon able to write back to his father in London that he was trading wheat “on an enormous scale.” He was becoming a rich man.

In 1705, Louis Gomez was numbered among the freemen of the city, and in 1710 a “memorial,” which may of course have been in some ways a bribe, from Louis Gomez persuaded the New York City Council to give him permission to ship wheat to Madeira, even though a number of petitions by others had been denied. In 1728, he was elected parnas of the Shearith Israel congregation, an unusual honor since he was, after all, an immigrant and newcomer to the community, among families that had been in New York for two and three generations. It was under his presidency that funds were raised to build New York's first synagogue, in Mill Street. Louis Gomez was as broad-minded in his philanthropies as the Levys: his name also appears on the list of those who contributed to the building of the steeple on Trinity Church. When Louis Gomez died, in 1740, he bequeathed “a pair of silver adornments for the five books of Moses, weighing 39 ounces,” to his oldest son. The bequest has become a tradition in the family,

and the silver ornaments, worn smooth by age, have been passed from eldest son to eldest son through seven generations.

Daniel, the third of Louis Gomez' six sons, was even more enterprising than his father. At the age of fourteen, Daniel joined his father in the wheat business and West Indies trade, and in the course of his wanderings he, like his father, met and married a member of an ancient and redoubtable Jamaican family, Rebecca de Torres. When she died in childbirth five years later, Daniel married another West Indian lady, Esther Levy of Curaçao.

From Daniel's first entry into it, business was good. Starting with such commodities as wheat and West Indian sugar, he expanded into other goods and commodities. Soon he was trading not only with Madeira but also with Barbados, Curaçao, London, and Dublin. In 1751, an advertisement in the *New York Gazette* offered a new shipment of Daniel's wares from Liverpool, including:

... earthenware in casks and crates, Cheshire cheese, loaf sugar, cutlery ware, pewter, grindstones, coals and sundry other goods too tedious to mention.

The blasé tone of the last phrase is an indication of the advertiser's success.

The list of names of men with whom Daniel Gomez did business reads like a *Who's Who* of Colonial America, and his customers included George Clinton, Walter Franklin, Robert Livingston, Myndert Schuyler, Isaac Sears, John de Peyster and Cornelius Ten Broeck of Albany; the Vallenburghs of Kinderhook; the Kips of Dutchess County; the Abeels, Brinckerhoffs, Beekmans, Barrons, Bogarts, the Rutgerses, the Van Cortlandts, the Van Wycks. His correspondence and bills went to such then-remote towns outside the colony as New Town, New Rochelle, Brunswick, Goshen, Huntington, Bushwick, Albany, the Hamptons, and Oyster Bay. He traded with other colonies as well, and his dealings extended to Boston, New Haven, Norwalk, New London, Allentown, Lancaster, Philadelphia, Princeton, Maryland, and South Carolina.

Though he concentrated on wheat, Daniel bought, sold, and traded nearly every other imaginable commodity, including stockings, suspenders, ginger, buttons, nightshirts, gunpowder, swords, preserved goods, silk, and

sailcloth. But through all this diversity of business he still seems to have been searching for some product, some area of trade, that would consume him utterly, to which he could devote himself single-mindedly. Suddenly, in 1710, he found it.

Most people know that the great Astor fortune in America is based upon the fur trade. Only a few people know, however—the few including the old Sephardic families—that the first John Jacob Astor was preceded in the fur trade—and by many years—by a Sephardic Jew, Daniel Gomez. Daniel was, in fact, one of the very first to consider the vast wilderness of the continent that lay on all sides of him, and the numbers of fur-bearing animals that lived there. Daniel was an American pioneer in a business that has consumed adventurers and merchants since the days of the Golden Fleece. He was also the first in America to see how the native Indians could be used in this trade as trappers and skimmers.

When, in 1710, Daniel Gomez began buying land in what is now Ulster County, his friends thought he was crazy. He was buying wilderness. Before long, he had acquired nearly 2,500 acres, including most of what is the present-day city of Newburgh, on the west bank of the Hudson River. He was able to buy this land cheaply only because no one else wanted it. It was also said, of all things, that the region was haunted. At the northwestern head of Newburgh Bay there is a rocky point of land which thrusts craggily into the river, and on a misty evening this peninsula, in profile, can indeed acquire an eerie look, as if possessed by spirits. And on this point, for untold hundreds of years before the arrival of the white man, the Algonquin tribes of what are now the New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania regions would meet at certain seasons of the year to worship, dance, and commune with their tribal gods and with the Great Spirit. This was a sacred place to the Indians, and before any hunting expedition, or any war, they traveled here in great numbers, often over hundreds of miles, to conduct the ceremonies that, they hoped, would improve the outcome of whatever task was at hand.

It has been said that when Henry Hudson sailed up the great river in 1609 he anchored off this point and watched the Indians performing one of their mystic ceremonies, dancing around a tall fire. In the minds of the Dutch settlers, the point quickly became associated with all sorts of dark deeds and, as Christians horrified at the heathen and mysterious evil rites that

were said to be performed on the rocky headland, they renamed it *De Deful's Dans Kammer* (The Devil's Dance Chamber). An old ditty, designed to frighten adventuresome children from visiting the area, went:

*For none that visit the Indian's den
Return again to the haunts of men.
The knife is their doom, oh sad is their lot.
Beware! Beware of the blood-stained spot!*

All this served to depress local real estate values, and to Daniel Gomez' advantage. He had learned that the "blood-stained spot" also marked the convergence of a number of well-traveled Indian trails, and he selected the Indians' den as a strategic place to establish a trading post.

Attempts had been made since earliest Colonial times to identify the American Indians with the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, and long lists of similarities between Indian and Judaic ritual had been drawn up, in an effort to prove this thesis. It was pointed out that, like the Jews, the Indians tabooed certain animals as "unclean." Like Jews, they had a sense of personal purity; they worshiped a great spirit called Yohovah; they had high priests; they had puberty rites. The Indians had important holy days in spring and fall, corresponding to Passover and Succoth, and a two-day fasting period corresponding to the Day of Atonement. The Indians had a lunar calendar, a similar counting system, and there are superficial similarities between the Hebrew and Indian tongues (both Hebrew and Indian languages make use of hyperbole and metaphor, and possess no comparative or superlative degree). Anthropologists have since dismissed these likenesses as coincidental, but in Daniel Gomez' day they were the subject of serious study. In the early Sephardic community of New York, these matters were discussed at the synagogue. Just in case they should turn out to be distant brethren, the rabbis had enjoined their congregations against mistreating or exploiting the local Indians. In any case, Daniel and the Indians got along famously right from the beginning. "I am able to understand the Indian thought," Daniel wrote to a friend.

For his post, Daniel Gomez selected a site that was near a spring where the gathering tribes regularly stopped for water, and he began, in 1717, to construct a massive stone blockhouse. Trading with the Indians was not

without certain obvious hazards, and his trading post was also a fortress. The walls were two feet thick in the front and in the back, from which direction an attack was considered likelier, they were three feet thick. The house contained two vast cellars which were to serve as vaults to store the goods—knives, hatchets, trinkets, and of course guns and whiskey—that Daniel intended to sell, as well as the furs he intended to acquire.

He was building in the middle of virgin forest, seven miles from the nearest hamlet, Newburgh, which had been settled only eight years earlier. Trees had to be felled for timber, and stones had to be lifted from the ground for walls. The house took six years to build, but when it was finished Daniel Gomez had built an oasis of strength and also of comfort in the wilderness. In the main parlor Daniel had placed a huge fireplace, eight feet wide and six feet deep, designed for business entertaining during the winter months. Twenty to thirty Indians could gather around the fire's warmth to trade and haggle over the prices of lynx, beaver, otter, black fox, mink, and muskrat. In a smaller room, another fireplace, equally large, had the same hospitable and commercial function. Contemporary reports describe Mr. Gomez' house as furnished in "the ultimate luxuries which Gomez brought up from New York." Here he and his two sons—and eventually his second wife—spent the winter fur-trading season. It must have been a lonely life, but Gomezes had always been self-sufficient types, more interested in deeds than in words.

The lonely fort became known as "the Jew's house," and local records refer to Daniel only as "Gomez the Jew." Until recent years the stream that ran by Daniel Gomez' house (and that was once navigable, and doubtless transported some of Daniel's goods for barter) was designated on local maps as "Jew's Creek." For thirty years, Daniel Gomez operated his trading post, at the same time keeping close personal and business ties with New York. Like his father, he was elected parnas of Shearith Israel, pledging the then lordly sum of fifteen pounds a year to the synagogue. As early as 1727, he was listed among the "freemen" of New York, but though the title of freeman, or burgher, permitted its owner certain rights, there were others—including the right to vote—that could be obtained only through naturalization.

In 1737, in a notorious contested election, the right of Jews to vote for the general assembly had been challenged. Daniel Gomez was among the

Jewish voters whose rights were in question, and the outcome was later called by William Seward “a stain in the annals of New York which the friends of rational liberty would wish to see effaced.” The objection was upheld, and the Jews’ rights were denied. Three years later, however, a Naturalization Act was passed. Daniel Gomez was among the first to take advantage of it and become a voter.

At the outbreak of the Revolution, with the arrival of British and Hessian troops in New York, Shearith Israel closed its doors and most members of the congregation moved to parts of the East held by the Revolutionary cause. Only a few Tory-minded Jews remained. These did not include the Daniel Gomezes. Daniel took his family to Philadelphia, the center of the American patriotic movement. He was an old man now, but he nonetheless became one of the founders of a new Sephardic congregation, Mikveh Israel.

He continued to keep track of his affairs in Newburgh, where one of his sons held the fort. It wasn’t long before his son was able to write Daniel that he had hired a teenage German immigrant as an apprentice, and was teaching the youth to pound the pelts of beaver, otter, and mink that were making their way down Jew’s Creek in Indian canoes. The young man’s name was John Jacob Astor—then spelled Ashdor—and the Gomez firm was paying him a dollar a day. Certainly this early association with the Gomezes accounts for the recurring rumor in New York that the Astors are of Jewish descent. There is no proof of this, but there is plenty of evidence of what young Gomez thought of young Astor—a butcher’s son with a heavy south German accent, a wildly indecipherable handwriting, and atrocious manners (after meals, Astor would wipe his hands on his shirt). Moses Gomez was, after all, a third-generation American and had no taste for this vulgarian. Soon Moses Gomez could take no more of him and, in dismissing him, explained to his father in a letter: “The fool has no head for this business absolutely”—a remarkably poor appraisal of the man who would found the American Fur Company, and become America’s first monopolist.

The Newburgh house still stands. Far from seeming haunted by evil spirits, the house and the lands around it have, over two and a half centuries, had a happy history. There have been a number of owners since the house passed out of the Gomez family, and all have treated it tenderly.

One added a second story of brick which contrasts handsomely with the gray stone walls Gomez built—built without mortar, fitted so perfectly that even today the walls stand straight and smooth. Now, though the acreage around it has been reduced to only twenty-seven, the blockhouse is still an elegant country home furnished in “the ultimate luxuries.” The present owners, who have lived in it for over twenty years, speak of it with affection. In 1968, Mrs. Jeffrey Starin, wife of the owner, told a reporter from the *New York Times*: “The children talk about the house as having great roots. It gives them a feeling of strength and security. It has stood up in all kinds of weather and, a few years ago, when there was all that talk about bombs and shelters, they used to say, ‘Our house will still be standing.’”

But alas, the Gomez name—which withstood so many generations in Spain—has died out in the United States. It decorates, of course, the higher branches of many Sephardic family trees, including the Nathans’, but the last male Gomez, we learn from Malcolm Stern’s extraordinary book, died in Franklin, New York, in 1926, without issue. He, Joseph Edwin Gomez, Jr., would have been Daniel’s great-great-great-nephew. He was one of five children, and Dr. Stern notes above their names: “Children converted with mother, Feb. 3, 1871.” If Daniel’s ghost was pacing the house in Newburgh when this news was received, there must have been outraged noises in the night.

“MAKE YOUR WAY TO THE WINDWARD COAST OF AFRICA”

Even after it became a British colony, New York remained very Dutch in feeling. The brick and tile with which the houses were built, the architecture, the machinery, the utensils—everything had been imported from the Netherlands until a replica of a Dutch *dorp* had been created on the tip of Manhattan, a miniaturized Amsterdam. The British had arrived and taken over things, but the Dutch families refused to change their quiet, cultured ways. They continued to live with their mahogany furniture, their Oriental rugs, their delft ornaments, their fine brass and silverware, their paintings by Dutch masters. They continued to worship at the Dutch church, and to speak the Dutch language. So resolutely did they cling to their old-world roots that Dutch was spoken in the Dutch Church of New York right up until the time of the Civil War.

The Dutch were scornful of the British arrivals, and considered them boorish and uncultivated. The people who counted were still the Dutch families—the de Peysters, the Bogarduses, the Lockermans, the Van Cortlandts, the Kierstedes, the Van Rensselaers, the Phillipses, and the Beekmans. The Jews of New York, with their affinity for things Dutch, felt similarly about the British. (England had, after all, had anti-Semitic pogroms, which Holland had never had.) As Revolutionary sentiments were marshaling themselves, there was no question of where most of the New York Sephardim would stand: squarely against the British.

But as the trickle of Sephardic arrivals continued—along with a much smaller trickle of Jews from central Europe, who joined the Sephardic congregations when they got here—Jews were scattering to cities other than New York, establishing little settlements in Philadelphia, Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans to the south, and in New England to the north, following the pattern of expansion of the American colonies along the eastern seaboard. A particularly important Sephardic community had been established early in the eighteenth century in Newport, where sons and grandsons of the Twenty-Three, along with their later-arriving cousins, had settled and were taking part in Newport’s booming trade. By 1750, Newport had outdistanced New York as a commercial seaport, and Newport’s Sephardim were getting even richer than New York’s. There were strong ties between Jewish Newport and Jewish New York. The famous Touro Synagogue in Newport was built as—and continues to be—a branch of New York’s Shearith Israel, and is owned by the New York congregation (it pays rent of a dollar a year). But in terms of eighteenth-century politics, Newport and New York were somewhat unlike. Newport, after all, was a *New England* city. There was more pro-Tory feeling about. Writing to his young Newport cousin, Aaron Lopez, Daniel Gomez frequently chided him for failing to support the Revolutionary cause. But young Aaron, though he respected his New York relative, had different ideas. On his arrival in America he had sworn in his naturalization oath to “be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty George the Third.” And Aaron had business reasons for remaining on good terms with the British. He had extensive dealings with them in Newport’s flourishing slave trade.

Aaron Lopez was a very determined young man. He had arrived in Newport from Portugal—where his family had been successful Marranos—in 1750 at the age of nineteen, and he had already acquired a wife, another cousin, five years older than he, named Abigail (Anna had been her Christian alias in Iberia), and a tiny daughter, Sarah (alias Catherine). In Newport the little family immediately resumed their Old Testament first names, and Aaron and his wife were remarried in the Jewish rite.

Men of Aaron’s generation had a distinct advantage over the earliest pioneers such as the Twenty-Three. There were other Jews, many of them relatives, to welcome them and help them set themselves up in business. In Aaron’s case, there were his Gomez and de Lucena connections in New

York, and, in Newport, an older half-brother, Moses Lopez, and still another cousin, Jacob Rodriguez Rivera, who had both become successful merchants. For several years, Aaron Lopez worked for Jacob Rivera while he saved his money so as to get into something on his own. Mr. Rivera was credited with having founded Newport's spermaceti industry, dealing in the whitish, waxy substance that could be separated from the oil of the sperm whale and was the principal ingredient of candlemaking. Between spermaceti and the town's "other" industry—slavery—Newport's harbor was one of the busiest in America, where as many as 150 ships lay at anchor at a time.

Slavery, and their part in it, has understandably become a sore point with the Sephardim, who tend to play down their ancestors' role, or to insist that Jewish merchants who took part in the slave trade did so "only on a very limited scale." Looking at it in historical perspective, however, and bearing in mind the attitudes that prevailed at the time—and remembering man's limitless capacity to overlook his own folly—it is possible to view slavery as it was viewed in the eighteenth century, as just another business. No one questioned the morality of the slave trade. Whether it was right or wrong was something not even considered. It was not in any way a Jewish preoccupation. All the "best people" were involved in it, and a great many of New England's oldest, finest, and most redoubtable fortunes are solidly based on human cargo. (One should not point to the Jews and overlook the Christians.)

In New England, slavery was not only tacitly approved. It was actually touted as an institution of great benefit to the black man, in that it brought him out of the heathen jungle into the civilized land of Christian godliness. A certain elder of the church in Newport would, according to one historian, go to church the Sunday following the arrival of a slaver from the Coast and "thank God that another cargo of benighted beings had been brought to a land where they could have the benefit of a Gospel dispensation." In a volume called *Reminiscences of Newport*, an idyllic picture of slavery is painted, and the attitudes prevalent in Aaron Lopez' day are perfectly defined. "If we look at the relation of master and slave at that time," the author writes, "we must own that the attachment between them was stronger, and the interest manifested in the welfare of each other far greater than anything in our days between employer and employee." He adds, "Few

were the complaints of the servitude exacted.” True, there were some who regarded slavery with distaste or even horror, but these were regarded as harmless eccentrics. Ministers such as Ezra Stiles and Samuel Hopkins ranted against slavery from their New England pulpits, but to little avail. Every man of substance owned slaves. The Episcopal Church itself owned a plantation in Barbados, and from time to time had to purchase fresh slaves to keep it in operation. And slavery had become such an immensely profitable business that those men engaged in it had no difficulty whatever in turning deaf ears to their scattered critics.

Newport’s first human cargo from Africa arrived as early as 1696, and soon afterward began that interesting triangular trade route which the slavers followed for the next hundred years. A ship would set sail from Newport to the west coast of Africa loaded with hogsheads of New England rum. In Africa, the rum would be traded for slaves, who would then be carried to the West Indies, where the third major transaction would take place—slaves traded for sugar, which was then brought back to Newport, where no less than twenty-two stills waited to turn the sugar into rum, which would then make its way back to Africa to be exchanged for more slaves.

The rum, in part, stayed in the African coastal colonies, where it was simply another form of currency, and of course a small portion of it went into the interior of Africa, where tribal chieftains accepted it in payment for their people. But most of the rum eventually went to Europe—to England, France, Holland, Portugal, and Denmark—for all these countries were then engaged in what amounted to an international business. And these were the countries, too, that needed slaves to provide labor in their expanding colonies.

There were opportunities for sizable profits at each corner of the triangular slave trade, and from a great variety of other goods that were bought, sold, and traded along the way. But slaves produced the tidiest yield—between £1,500 and £2,000 profit per shipload being about average, at a time when, to get an idea of comparative prices, a hundred-gallon cask of Madeira wine sold for something like £6. At the height of the slave trade when Aaron Lopez was active, as many as 184 vessels were involved from the state of Rhode Island alone. In the United States, only South Carolina

exceeded this figure. This meant that Newport saw the arrival or departure of a slave ship every single day of the year.

Of course it was easier for the men who owned the slaving fleets to justify their curious occupation. Most owners never set foot aboard their ships. They had never seen a slave ship being unloaded or watched the sick and filthy men and women—and children, too—emerge with their black skins gone gray from hunger and confinement below the decks. The same was true of the rest of commercial and social Newport. Slavery was invisible. Slaves were nearly always disposed of in West Indian or southern ports. As Jeremy Belknap, an old Newporter, once recalled: “Very few cargoes ever came to this port.... I remember one, between thirty and forty years ago, which consisted almost wholly of children ... sometimes the Rhode Island vessels, after having sold their prime slaves in the West Indies, brought the remnants of their cargoes hither for sale.” Mr. Belknap then wistfully added: “Since this commerce has declined, the town of Newport has gone to decay.”

Out of sight was out of mind and, meanwhile, an altogether different sort of character was required for the man who captained a slaving ship, who anchored off the African coast and engaged in the actual barter of human bodies in exchange for hogsheads of rum.

Of a different caliber, too, was the “governor” who operated the coastal “castle” where slaves were herded and corraled until sold. At the height of the eighteenth-century slave trade, as many as forty of these stations were strung along the so-called Slave Coast, the low-lying delta country that stretches for 700 miles between the mouth of the Volta River and Mount Cameroon. Here, those blacks “deemed to make the best slaves” were brought for 350 years. Of the forty castles, fourteen were English, three were French, fifteen were Dutch, four were Portuguese, and four were Danish. But from the figures of a single year of trade—38,000 slaves sold by the British, 20,000 by the French, 4,000 by the Dutch, 10,000 by the Portuguese, and 2,000 by the Danes—it is quite clear that more than half the trade was in British hands.*

Slaves were driven on foot to these castles from their villages in the interior. For this most dreadful stage of their long journey, during which the greatest loss of life occurred, their herdsman were almost always their own people. The most demoralized positions in the entire slave trade fell to these

men. As for the native chieftain who sold off members of his tribe for barrels of rum, he was almost as remote from the death and torture of the business as the powdered and bewigged ladies and gentlemen back in Newport, chatting over teacups, the leaders of business and society who were enjoying the gratifying monetary fruits of the operation at the other end. White or black, slavery was the creation of the nabobs.

On the African coast, price negotiations were in the hands of the slaver captain and the resident governor of the castle. It was all very businesslike, and there were fluctuations in the market just as there were in every other commodity. Sometimes it took months for a satisfactory deal to be completed, but once it was, the slaves were loaded aboard with great dispatch. A captain who “lost” his slaves for any reason was, understandably, not assured a precisely warm welcome back in Newport, and so some care was taken for the slaves’ well-being, but no more care than was economically feasible. Slave quarters were in spaces between the decks, three to three and a half feet high. Men were stretched out on their backs, in spaces eighteen inches wide per man, their ankles secured by chains. Women and children lay in a separate compartment, equally crowded but unchained. The journey across the Atlantic took anywhere from six to ten weeks, depending on the weather. Sometimes, if the captain was a lenient one, the prisoners were allowed above decks for short periods to get exercise and a breath of fresh air. Often, during these moments, prisoners tried to fling themselves overboard into the sea. Uncooperative prisoners were punished in such bizarre ways as being tied to ships’ anchor chains and dragged in the wake.

There were equally bizarre dangers to be encountered by those employed at various points of the slaving triangle. One of Aaron Lopez’ Da Costa cousins, who helped her husband with his end of the business in Kingston, Jamaica, and who happened to be pregnant at the time, one night “went to draw rum to adulterate for the Sunday sale of slaves”* by candlelight. A spark from her candle dropped into the high-proof rum, and the rum, along with the unfortunate woman, went up in flames. Mrs. Da Costa very nearly did for Kingston what Mrs. O’Leary’s cow later did for Chicago, for nearby were “rum, brandy and gin shops by the score” which contained thousands of inflammable gallons. Luckily, the “engine” arrived quickly and the fire was extinguished, though too late to save the lady.

In this, Newport's leading, highly respected, even fashionable industry, young Aaron Lopez—enterprising, handsome, with dark hair, high cheekbones, and large, dark, commanding eyes; small and wiry—was an early success. From the pennies saved while working with his cousin Jacob Rivera, he had been able, within two years, to become a partner in the purchase of the ship *Ann*, described in her bill of sale as “A double deck new brigantine about 113 tons burthen ... completely finished for the African trade ... to be sheathed with inch pine boards or ½ inch cedar ... the awning, a second boat, caboose, colors, small arms, *chains* and *hand cuffs* [these items are underscored in the bill of sale] and every other small utensil to be excluded and provided by the Captain.” Not even the implements of imprisonment were dealt in by the owner.*

At 113 tons, the *Ann* was probably about seventy feet in length, a small ship for such long voyages, but few slave ships were larger. Her cost to Aaron Lopez was quoted at “£690 Sterling,” not even half the profit that could be made from a single load of slaves. On November 27, 1772, nine months after she had been ordered, the *Ann* lay ready to sail in Newport harbor, her decks loaded with such items as Madeira wine, brown sugar, molasses, vinegar, thirty sheep, thirty-nine turkeys, twenty-eight geese, twenty-one ducks. But the largest item, which caused the *Ann* to ride low in the water, was “98 hogsheads and 14 tierces New England Rum,” approximately 11,000 gallons, weighing over forty tons. Lopez made a brief inspection of his new ship—probably the last he ever saw of her—and turned her over to his captain, a sturdy Yankee named William Einglish, with the following orders:

Sir:

Our brig the *Ann*, of which you are at present the master, being loaded and ready for the Seas, Our orders to you are, That you Embrace the first fair wind and make the best of your way to the Coast of Africa; and as we have no opinion of the windward Coast trade, we think it advisable, that as soon as you procure the necessary rice that you proceed without delay to Anamoboe Road; when please God you arrive there safe Convert your cargo into good Slaves; on the best terms you can; you are not insensible that lying any considerable time on the Coast is not only attended with a very heavy expense, but also great risk of Slaves you may have on board.

We therefore would recommend to you dispatch, even if you are obliged to give a few gallons more or less on each slave....

Obviously, a great deal depended on the reliability of the captain, and there is no way of telling how many of these men were able successfully to cheat their owners. But Eingleish seems to have been an honest man. His orders went on to explain that a certain David Mill, governor of one of the coast castles, still owed Lopez' cousin Jacob Rivera "twenty-seven men and thirteen women slaves" from an earlier shipment which had arrived short that number. These, Lopez asserted, Mill would "immediately deliver" to Captain Eingleish, and he was sure of this "from Mr. Mill's universal character." In order that these forty not be confused with the rest of the shipment, Lopez instructed the captain to "put some distinguishing mark" on those, "that we may distinguish them from those of the cargo."

The bookkeeping was then explained. Two-thirds of the regular cargo were to be bought on Lopez' account, and the remaining third were to be charged to Jacob Rivera. The forty owed slaves were to be credited to each man equally. All slaves, the orders advised, were to be sold in the slave market of Savannah La Mar, Jamaica, and the *Ann* was to return to Newport "clean of them."

It would be romantic and wrong to picture Captain Eingleish as a demon. Actually, his approach to the business was crisp and dispassionate. He had a job to do. He was meticulous in his record keeping, and anything that smacked of inefficiency or wasted motion annoyed him. In his first report to Lopez, dated January 14, 1773, Eingleish wrote: "After a voyage of forty days I arrived at the Islands of Deloes on the windward Coast of Africa, where I furnished myself with what rice I think will be sufficient for my voyage [rice, and a little mutton, comprised the diet of the captured slaves], and shall sail this day for the Gold Coast, wind and weather permitting." Rumors, he said, had reached him that business was "very Dull for our Trade," and that ships were being forced to move further eastward along the coast in search of slaves. "The lowest price that they asked for slaves here," he wrote, "is a hundred and fifty barrels, which is equal to two hundred gallons of Rum." He went on to report that "Various Gales of Wind" had meant that "the greatest part of my Turkeys Perished, Also Lost the 30 Bundles of Hay the Fourth day after I sail'd. I have still on board twenty-

eight sheep with the greatest part of the Geese and Ducks which I expect to deliver in good order.” This meant that only two sheep had been butchered and consumed during the crossing, a commendably thrifty record.

Two months later, in March, Einglish wrote to Lopez from Anamabu, a village still standing on the Gold Coast, saying: “I arrived at Cape Corse Castle on the 12th of February, where on my arrival applied to Governor Mill and gave him the offer of my cargo on Various Terms, from one hundred and eighty gallons to two hundred for men and in proportion for women,” who were always sold for somewhat less. Mr. Mill, it turned out, despite his “universal character,” was somewhat overextended. He owed slaves to captains in all directions—including, of course, the forty to Lopez and Rivera—and the best he could promise Einglish, the captain reported to his employer, was that after every ship, in its proper turn, had received its share, he might be able to supply Einglish with some “in about Eighteen Months.” As for the forty short from the previous order, Mill replied vaguely that he would have them for Einglish when Einglish was “ready to sail.”

Anamabu that spring was understocked with slaves and overstocked with rum. Wrote Einglish: “Here is very poor times for every fort and private house is stocked with Rum ... there is no selling of Rum nor anything else. I have not been five nights on board since my arrival but continually cruising from one fort to another striving to sell my Cargo.” The more he cruised, apparently, the higher the price of slaves became and the longer the wait for delivery. From a deal which he reports “I struck with Mr. Henrick Woortman,” he exchanged four thousand gallons at the rate of “two hundred gallon for men and one hundred and eighty for women, payable in three months.” From “Various private traders,” he was able to get a few more at a slightly lower price—“190 Gallon and 195 for men and in proportion for women”—but soon the price jumped again to 210 gallons for men slaves, and a three-month delay. He wrote to Lopez and Rivera: “Gentlemen, I have but five Slaves on board and God knows when I shall have five more for the Country Trade is so dull and Slaves scarce.” He added that his supply of sheep was now down to twenty-seven, along with sixteen geese, twelve ducks, and five turkeys.

Two weeks later, Einglish wrote to Lopez that he had bought ten more slaves, bringing the total on board to fifteen, and that he was about to

deliver Mr. Woortman's rum at his castle. "If Mr. Woortman pays me according to agreement," he noted somewhat nervously, "I shall sail the Beginning of June." The rum market continued depressed and, "There is no Governor, neither English Nor Dutch that will take Rum for present pay." The same went for "Lisbon wine," though the captain noted a better market for "wine that will pass for Madeira." The price of rum was driven further downward by the arrival of two more vessels, one from Boston and one "of Mr. Brown of Newport," both loaded to the gunwales with hogsheads of the stuff and, of course, when rum prices dropped, slave prices rose.

By the middle of May—Einglish had been at anchor over two months—thirty slaves were on board the *Ann*. Governor Mill had still not delivered the forty slaves he owed Aaron Lopez and Jacob Rivera, and Captain Einglish was still anxiously awaiting delivery from Mr. Woortman, which was promised for May 28. There was more bad news. Captain Einglish's chief mate, whom Einglish describes as "a worthless Drunking fellow," had, in a moment of bibulous carelessness, been responsible for the loss of the *Ann's* longboat and a load of valuable provisions. "I dispatched him," Einglish writes, "to Cape Cord in the Long Boat for water and to settle some business there that I could not leave the vessel to tend, his boat being well fitted with everything that I thought necessary, and had in Twenty Three water casks, two barrels flour, one box soap, and fifty pounds of coffee, which goods he was to deliver and receive the Gold." However, "In one of his drinking frolicks, carrying more sail than Good Judgment would allow him, he took in a large quantity of water and stood so nigh the shore that he was almost in the breakers, whereupon the natives perceiving came off with a number of canoes and several of them boarding the boat on one side, and she already waterlogged, readily overset and Every shilling's worth lost to the Great Determent of the Voyage. For now I am obliged to hire a canoe and employ a number of Blacks that I should have had no occasion for." To add to his indignation, he noted that the price of slaves had climbed to 230 gallons a head.

By June 6, Einglish had forty-one slaves on board, and Woortman was eight days past his deadline, promising delivery now "in a few days." Mr. Mill, too, was dragging his feet, and the captain wrote to his employer in Newport: "I waited on Governor Mill two days ago for the slaves due, but did not receive them, although his promise to me was that I should have

them whenever demanded.” If Mill’s response seemed suspiciously evasive, Einglish’s counter-move against Mill was properly aggressive. He applied to Mill for payment of the sunken longboat, claiming that it was the natives, who were in Mill’s charge, climbing aboard on one side that had caused the boat to sink, not the chief mate’s drunkenness and poor judgment. Mill agreed that the “Natives should be made to pay,” and Einglish seems to have concluded that this was quite just since “they were concerned in a most Vilanous Action in plundering and oversetting her.” Einglish concludes with a prayer that no more rum might arrive from New England to further drive down the price.

On July 12, Governor Mill wrote to Lopez and Rivera explaining that he was once again sending the firm a short shipment. “I have only been able, trade being so bad,” he said, “to pay Captain Einglish 30 of the 40 slaves owed ... and hope the detention of those ten will be no loss to you. If it is I will thankfully pay you. I have paid for the stock and I hope to your satisfaction.” He does not mention paying for the longboat. The same day, Captain Einglish added to the list what his hold contained: “19 men slaves, marked ‘0’ on the right thigh, also 11 women marked ditto. Being marked and numbered as in the margin, and are to be delivered in the like good order and well conditioned at the port of Kingston in Jamaica (mortality, insurrection, and the danger of the seas only excepted).”

The Woortman delivery must have been made soon after because, on July 15, Captain Einglish set sail from Anamabu, where he had spent just over five months, with a load of ninety-five slaves comprising, in addition to the thirty from Mill, “33 men slaves, 2 boys, 27 women, and 3 girl slaves.” All, he noted, “is very good and healthy at present and have not lost one slave yet. Thank God for it.”

It took Einglish eighty-five days, in heavy weather most of the way, to make the westward journey across the Atlantic to Jamaica. Once there he was forced to report that he had had “the misfortune of burying six slaves on my passage,” five of them from the regular cargo and one of the group marked “0”—probably by branding—on the right thigh. Of the remainder, he commented that they were “for the great part in good health and well liked by the gentleman who intends to purchase.... By what I can learn from several gentlemen that has seen the slaves they will sell to good advantage—the 13th Inst. is the Day for Sale.” A few weeks later, however,

the captain's report from Jamaica indicated that he had been somewhat optimistic in his earlier letter, as to both the state of the slaves' health and that of the market. A disorder which English characterizes only as "swelling," and which was probably a form of scurvy or food poisoning, had afflicted many of his cargo during the crossing, and now English wrote: "Gentlemen, I buried one man slave since my last, and the Swelling began to range so violent among the slaves that nine of them was sold for a mere trifle ... when I arrived, there was but two slaves that had the least sign of swelling. This disorder first begun in their feet and worked upward ... when got as far as their stomach they died in a few hours." He added gloomily that "There has been three ships' cargoes of slaves sold since my arrival, and none of their averages exceeded [ours] not five shillings in a slave. Therefor I do not think that this market is as good as the Merchants here says it ought to be."

Still, Captain English was, according to the accounting he submitted, able to sell his remaining slaves for £3,620. Expenses amounted to £1,399, which meant a tidy profit of £1,259, or about 90 percent. He sailed from Jamaica in December and, after a brief stop at Môle Saint Nicolas, on the northwestern tip of Haiti, where he loaded the *Ann* with sugar, he headed home to Newport.

* Slavery was brought to the colonies by the English. England did get around to abolishing slavery somewhat before the United States did, in 1807. Denmark was the first nation to abolish slavery, in 1792. The northern American states, meanwhile, starting with Vermont in 1777 and ending with New Jersey in 1804, all had adopted state abolition laws before Great Britain did.

* Undoubtedly to thin it with water.

* There was an ancient Talmudic principle involved here. For centuries the rabbinate decreed that when a Jew was involved in the human slave trade, he could not go below certain standards of humanity and decency. The Jew could deal in slaves as a business—as everyone else did—but he could not be involved in their punishment or torture. In the tenth century, for instance, there was a great vogue for blond eunuch slaves. They were used in harems and for homosexual purposes. The Jews of the Orient and Middle East were disturbed by this trade, and went to their rabbis for guidance. They were advised that it was permissible for them to buy and sell eunuchs, but that they were under no circumstances to be involved with the performance of castrations. The rabbis told them, "Let the guy do that."

ALLARUMS AND RAVAGES

Aaron Lopez' ships made yearly visits to Africa in this fashion and, from his modest beginning with the *Ann*, his fleet grew to the point where, at the height of his career, just before the first guns of the American Revolution, he owned, or partly owned, more than thirty vessels in what was called the "African Trade," or, more euphemistically, the "West Indian Trade."

As his fortune grew, so did the size of his family. He seems to have been cut out to be a patriarch on the grandest scale, and doubtless envisioned each new son as a future asset to his business. His first wife, Anna, bore him eight children before she died—in childbirth—in 1762. She, of course, had been Aaron's cousin, and Aaron next married another cousin, Sally Rivera, some sixteen years his junior, the daughter of his business associate, Jacob Rodriguez Rivera. Thus his partner became his father-in-law.

Aaron's second wife proceeded to present him with nine children and when, one by one, the members of this voluminous family reached marriageable age, suitable partners had to be found among the Sephardim of Newport and New York, who, at this point, were nearly all relatives already. The web of intramural marriage drew even tighter. One Lopez daughter married a Touro, and two of Aaron's daughters married Gomez boys—who were each other's first cousins, and both nephews of Daniel Gomez—and another married a Hendricks (who were already related to Gomezes) and still another became Rachel Lopez-Lopez when she married her own first cousin. Two other Lopez girls married the same man, Jacob Levy. This happened when Mr. Levy, widowed by one Lopez girl, married her younger sister. This marriage was not so much dynastic as dizzying in

the extent to which it crossed up various Levys. Since Levy had children by both his wives, his marriages made his various children first cousins. To further confuse the tangled Lopez-Gomez-Rivera bloodline, one of Aaron Lopez' daughters, Hannah, married her uncle. With this union, Aaron's brother-in-law became his son-in-law as well, and Hannah Lopez became her mother's sister-in-law.

An inevitable result of these marriages was that the two family heads, Aaron Lopez and Daniel Gomez, had close ties—family as well as business—even though they did not see eye to eye on pre-Revolutionary politics. Over the years, the two men corresponded between New York and Newport, and much of this correspondence survives. Though Daniel was more than thirty years older than Aaron, the two had much in common. Each wrote to the other in a formal, courtly style, the older man addressing his younger Newport friend as “your grace,” referring to “the lady your wife,” and extending best wishes to others of “your noble house.”

Both Gomez and Lopez liked to gamble, and much of their correspondence concerned Gomez' purchase of lottery tickets in New York for Lopez. Neither man had much luck. In August, 1753, Gomez wrote Lopez: “According to your order, I bought in your name two lottery tickets, Nos. 1190 and 1192, which may please God to be venturous and that by that way you may obtain something of consequence. I have charged to you their cost which is £3. Your Grace orders me to send you the tickets, but I do not see fit to do it until a second order arrives because in case they are lost Your Grace will lose what they provide.” Alas, a few weeks later, Daniel Gomez advised: “I sent my son to find out about the lottery tickets, but because of our sins both your tickets and mine came out blank.... I assure Your Grace that I am sorry that they have had such little fortune. God may please to give us a better one.” Their prayers, however, seem to have gone unanswered. Years later, Gomez was writing: “According to your request I have bought, in your name, a Lottery ticket number 77 which will please Your Grace to be fortunate.” And, a short while later, he was advising: “Enclosed is your lottery ticket which I am sorry to say came out blank. God may give you a better fortune next time.” Gomez' system seems to have been to buy tickets containing double numbers—1190, 77, 881, 544, 311, 2200, etc. It was as good a system as any.

The two kept each other posted on family news. When Daniel's young wife, who had been ill for many months, died, he wrote to his friend movingly: "I cannot express in words the great grief and sorrow that accompanies me as Our Lord has served to free from my company, and from this to a better life, my esteemed and loving wife, who offered her soul to the Creator on the 31st of May.... May the Great Majesty receive her soul with kindness and place her with the just and good ... and that she is enjoying eternal Glory as her good heart and her being a good Jew confirm me in that certainty." And learning of the death, in infancy, of one of Aaron Lopez' children, Daniel wrote to him: "You stated your hopes that your little angel would improve in health, but [I have been informed] that God has received him and I assure you that we are in grief as if he were of our own, and I send Your Grace, the lady your wife, and the rest of the family, our sympathy, and pray to God that the life the little innocent lacked will be increased in yours."

For all his deferential manner toward Aaron Lopez, Daniel Gomez was not hesitant to give him business advice when he felt this was in order. He had little use for Lopez' candle business, which was something of a sideline, and told him: "I am sorry there is no better way in which Your Grace may occupy himself other than by making candles. My brother David invested £240 last year in green wax and tallow, his negroes made candles which he sent to all the islands, and there they stand, with no sales, and at a very low price. All of this I inform Your Grace of.... You will suffer great losses and if you could sell the candles I advise you to proceed." Either Lopez failed to receive this letter or he simply ignored Gomez' advice because, a few weeks later, Gomez complained because Lopez had sent them on to New York for Gomez to sell instead of selling the candles in Newport. He wrote testily: "acknowledging six boxes of spermaceti and candles which you have sent me by Captain Morrow's schooner, which I received, and am sorry you sent such merchandise to be sold here, and to exchange for tallow, when you know and everybody knows that it is very difficult to sell here and that tallow is cash money. I would appreciate your ordering me to return them to you, as I offered them to different merchants and not one is interested. I am willing to serve you in what I can, but I cannot do the impossible." His anger was quickly spent, however, for a few

paragraphs later in the same letter he wrote: “Today is the last day for the Lottery.... I wish God is willing to give you some prize....”

At the same time, the labyrinthine bloodlines that bound the Sephardim of both Newport and New York together were capable of producing weighty problems. When people are tied together by blood as well as money, the two elements fuse and cross in ways that can be painful, and already the Sephardim were showing signs of the strain. There were whole branches of certain families which—often for the most trifling reasons—no longer spoke to other branches, and the little band of Jews, who had first approached the vicissitudes of the new world with a certain unity of purpose, had spread and dispersed into touchy factions. Nearly always it was money—what some relative had done with his money, which displeased some other relative—that lay at the heart of the dispute. The more relatives there were, the more complex were the relationships.

Not only each new son, but each new son-in-law, had to be given some sort of position in the interconnected family enterprises. And, alas, not all these sons and sons-in-law possessed the talents the older generations might have wished. Both Daniel Gomez and Aaron Lopez faced this problem. Daniel’s son Moses married Daniel’s brother’s daughter, Esther—first cousins again—but neither of their two sons (two others died in infancy) displayed any ability in the fur trade. Isaac, Jr., was always getting “stung” by the Indians. “Stung again!” he would write the patriarch, almost gaily, each time it happened. There is a suggestion that Isaac had taken to imbibing some of the firewater used in the Indian trade, a practice his grandfather had abstemiously avoided. Isaac married one of the Lopez girls.

An even more ticklish situation existed in Aaron Lopez’ family. Aaron’s oldest daughter, Sally, had married a young man named Abraham Pereira Mendes, a member of an old and distinguished Sephardic family that had settled in Jamaica. At the time of the engagement, Abraham Mendes’ elder brother wrote to Aaron Lopez: “The choice of my brother Abraham to your daughter Miss Salle, for his consort, has merited much our Abrobation [*sic*], as also that of my honoured Mother. The Amiableness of your daughter, the Bright Character and honour of your family’s, as much in these parts, as those of ancient, in Portugal, cannot but give us in general the greatest satisfaction.... From my brother repeated expressions of their reciprocal love must make them happy, and pleasing to you, and beg leave to return

my congratulating you and all your good family, on this joyfull occasion, wishing them all the Happiness they can wish for, and pray the Almighty may crown them with his Blessings....” There were other reasons for rejoicing. Sally Lopez was a rich man’s eldest daughter, and the Mendeses of Jamaica, though they bore an ancient name, were sorely in need of an infusion of money. Leah Mendes, Abraham’s mother, had been widowed with several children, and was described by her son as being “reduced very low, owing to the great Losses she has met with ... the condition I found her in shocked me to the highest degree.”

Abraham’s brother added that he was sure Aaron had found in Abraham “such Bright Qualitys which few of his age are endowed with.” He added that while Abraham’s education might leave something to be desired, considering the sort of formal education available in those days on the West Indian island, his intellectual abilities were “those of Nature.” He was sure, he said, that “with cultivating in your good Advice must make him a Bright Man.” This, however, turned out to be wishful thinking.

Aaron decided that his new son-in-law’s acquaintance with the island would make him an excellent candidate for the job of overseer of the Lopez enterprises in Jamaica, a task that up to then had been performed by a series of non-family firms. From the very beginning there were difficulties. For one thing, Abraham Pereira Mendes appears to have enjoyed poor health. A great deal of the business correspondence between father and son-in-law concerns the state of the latter’s stomach, feet, or head. Abraham and Sally were married in Newport, and soon after their return to Kingston, to take up his duties, Abraham was writing Aaron: “I must now acquaint you of my safe arrival in the place.... I can’t say agreeable being sick all the passage, and was reduced very low. At my landing I could hardly keep my legs....” A few days later he was no better, writing: “My hands with weakness tremble in such a manner I can hardly write.” The next year, he was complaining of “A surfeit and a fit of the Gout, which has laid me up three weeks and am now in a most deplorable condition and cannot mount my horse, which has put my business backward.”

This, of course, was the most irritating result of a sickly son-in-law—business, inevitably, was put backward, and Abraham’s letters back to Aaron are full of apologies and excuses for his poor performance. The news is nearly always gloomy: “We lost 10 sheep.... The black horse looks very

bad.... Stepped on board to view the slaves ... the major part of them are small things, and those that are large has age on their side.... The poor success I had in receiving your Outstanding Debts and not getting cash for the cargoes have not enabled me to remit until March.... I am much afraid your Out-Standing Debts will not be collected, not for want of my care, but the people being incapable.” His father-in-law warned him about a certain slave captain named All, whom Aaron Lopez distrusted. Abraham met the man and, “To my great Surprize,” found him quite satisfactory. The result was disastrous. The man turned out to be an utter scoundrel. By making private deals with Slave Coast governors, Captain All bilked Aaron Lopez out of a full year’s profits.

One of Abraham’s problems, in addition to his health, was his lack of education. His letters are full of eccentric spellings, their sentence structure is erratic, and at one point he apologizes: “You’ll excuse the Writing being oblige to gett a Young Cousin to scribe over.” It is possible that a “Young Cousin” wrote most of his letters.

His devotion to his young wife was, despite his brother’s assurances, something less than complete. During the early days of his Jamaica sojourn she remained behind in Newport, and it would seem as though Abraham missed her rather little. Writing to her father, at one point, he mentioned that he had had a letter from “my dear Sally,” though he has yet “not received the Sweet Meets she had promised to send.” He added that he would have “no time” to write her, and quaintly urged her father to “embrace her in my behalf with all the love of a Loving Husband.” His attitude may have disturbed Sally because, about a year later, she sailed to Jamaica to join him. He was probably less than happy to see her. A few months after her arrival, he did a thing that was shocking news to eighteenth-century Newport as well as to Jewish society in the West Indies. He ran off with another woman.

Obviously, this was a situation requiring delicacy and a certain firmness. Aaron Lopez was disgusted with his son-in-law’s delinquency and poor performance, and he was ready to wash his hands of him. The same was true of Abraham’s brothers. His father was dead, and it fell to his mother, Leah Mendes, to put her child’s household in order. There was, after all, much at stake—not only Abraham’s job, but the family’s reputation, the possibility of future children. She set about single-handedly to repair the

marriage. It wasn't easy, and took her many months, and once she had exacted her son's promise to return to his wife it was next necessary to appease his angry father-in-law. It is possible to envision this aristocratic old lady, who had been born in Spain, who had watched many of her Marrano relatives die in the Inquisition, writing this poised and elegant letter to Aaron Lopez announcing the success of her mission and begging him to forgive her son:

HONOURABLE SIR,

It is with great pleasure and joy I now write you acquainting of the dutifulness of my son Abraham in complying to our request to return home. He has insured me of never disobliging nor never to cause you and his wife any more grievance, and will always be bound to your obedience, and he has acknowledged his fault of being so long absent, and it is with no doubt it gives him great concern in reflecting on his follies, but you are fully sensible that youthness and bad advisers are always of great prejudice, and much so when they won't be ruled. But all his transgressions will be an example for his better amendment, and I make no doubt that he will fulfill his promises to me, and he goes overjoyed to your feet to crave pardon, and which I hope you'll grant for the sake of a poor widow'd mother, who will always receive great satisfaction and contentment in knowing of his good proceedings and dutifulness to you. And as God (the best exemplar of the whole world) forgives mankind, so I hope you'll be so pleased as to pardon him, and in granting me this favour I shall forever acknowledge.

LEAH MENDES

Abraham seems to have been incapable of speaking for himself, so his mother wrote to his wife also:

LOVING DAUGHTER,

It is with great pleasure I now acquaint you of Abraham complying to our request in returning to enjoy your sweet company, and I beg of you that you'll forgive him of his misbehaving and his absence from so good a wife as you, but he has promised of never causing any more grievance, but always to be the instrument of seeking for to give you pleasure and content, therefore hope that all will be forgotten, and shall always be pleased to

know of both your happiness, and remain craving you health and prosperity from, Your Loving Mother,

LEAH MENDES

All, however, was not forgotten, and the marriage continued on an unsteady course. There were a number of other separations, each of them painful for all concerned. Two years later, his brother David visited Abraham in Kingston, found him parted from his wife, and wrote to Aaron Lopez: "I found my Brother Abraham in a very poor state of health. He is just come out of dangerous fit of sickness. He seems to be very anxious of seeing his wife, and throwing himself at your feet. I shall dispatch him by the latter end of next month, in the manner I promised you, and shall write you by him more copiously on that subject." But at that point Abraham's name drops from the family correspondence. He was "dispatched" to Newport, his brother succeeded him in Jamaica, and Abraham's wife followed him home a few months later.

Aaron Lopez, meanwhile, continued to prosper until he was counted among Newport's richest men. In March of 1762 he had attempted to be naturalized but had been refused by the Newport court. His Tory leanings were making him unpopular. Since he also maintained a summer home in Swansea, Massachusetts, he petitioned the superior court of Taunton to make him a citizen of that state, and on October 15, 1762, he became the first Jew to be naturalized in Massachusetts. At his request, the words "upon the true faith of a Christian" were deleted from the oath.

He had also joined a club, established a year earlier, which was purely social and exclusively for the use of gentlemen of Newport's Jewish elite. It was the answer to Newport's Fellowship Club, which had no Jews as members. Aaron took his club with great seriousness, and was nearly always present at its gatherings, on Wednesday evenings "during the winter season." The others in the club, it might be noted, were nearly all, in one way or another, Aaron Lopez' relatives, members of the Lopez-Bivera-Mendes-Levy-Hart complex of families. The club operated under strict rules. From five to eight, members were "at liberty to divert at cards," and in order that the club not gain the reputation of a gaming club, stakes were set at "twenty shillings at whist, picquet, or any other game." If a member was found guilty of playing for higher stakes, he was to be fined "four

bottles of good wines,” to be enjoyed by the club at its next gathering. At eight, the rules noted that “supper (if ready)” was to be brought in. No card playing was permitted after supper, and members were to depart for their homes at ten. If any member had a matter of club business to discuss, he had to wait “till the chairman has just drank some loyal toast.” The club was an excellent diversion from home, wives, children, and attendant problems. The club bylaws also specified that there should be no “conversations relating to synagogue affairs” during club evenings. Again, the punishment for mixing synagogue and club life was “four bottles of good wines.”

Aaron had not joined in the nonimportation agreement, according to which a number of New England merchants had pledged to import no further goods from Britain. He could not afford to. A good standing with the British was important for business reasons. At heart, he was probably not an outright Tory. He was not as Tory as, for instance, his neighbor and fellow clubman Isaac Hart, and several other Newport Jews—a state of affairs that had begun to split Newport’s Jewish club down the center. Lopez found himself in a difficult situation when the British attacked and seized Newport in 1777—moving 8,000 troops onto the island, destroying 480 houses, burning ships in the harbor, devastating fields and orchards, and in general sacking and looting the city. At this point, Aaron deemed it wise to move his large family elsewhere, to secure them, as he put it in a letter to a friend, “from sudden Allarums and the Cruel Ravages of an enraged Enemy.” He chose the considerably safer inland town of Leicester, Massachusetts. All the Lopeses—including his father-in-law, Mr. Rivera—moved there in the autumn of that year.

Here, he wrote, “I pitched my tent, erecting a proportionable one to the extent of my numerous family on the summit of a high healthy hill, where we have experienced the civilities and hospitality of a kind Neighborhood.” It was indeed a proportionable tent that Aaron Lopez pitched—a huge, square mansion of brick with white pilasters at the corners and tall arched windows that addressed the surrounding landscape. The Lopez mansion still stands as part of Leicester Academy. In his grand house, decorated by his young and pretty wife, Aaron Lopez became a great host, and was noted for the size and opulence of his dinner parties, receptions, and balls. He became a Jewish Maecenas, a vast patron of the arts and education, a collector of paintings, and he was still under fifty, still in his prime. There were hardly

any who dared suggest to him that now, with his shipping trade cut off and his business seriously limited by the war, he might be spending too much.

He continued to keep in touch with Newport, gathering what news he could from friends who passed through the besieged city, and wrote that he had heard that “the poor inhabitants of that Town have been very much distress’d this winter for the want of fuel and provisions, those Individuals of my Society in particular, who [my informant] said had not tasted any meat but once in two months: Fish there was none at this season of the year, and they were reduced to living upon Chocolate and Coffee. These and many other Callamities and Insults the wretched inhabitants experience ought to incite our thanks to the Great Being who gave us resolution to exchange at so early a period that melancholy Spot for that we are now enjoying.” To a friend he wrote: “Your dwelling house I understand has suffered much. Your neighbor Augustus Johnson was found dead at his house. My [former] neighbor Gideon Sesson’s wife is crazy.” What he appears to have resented most was news that the occupying British officers were spreading slanderous tales about Newport womanhood. He complained that “the vertue of several of our Reputable Ladies has been attacked and sullied by our destructive Enemys.” When the chips were down, he too became a Revolutionary.

The Revolution ended the golden age of Newport as a commercial center—though of course it would flourish again as a resort—and Aaron Lopez was never to return. In 1780, he was saddened to hear of the death, in Philadelphia, of his old friend Daniel Gomez, who had reached the lofty age of eighty-five. With his death, Daniel’s son Moses became a rich man. Aaron Lopez’ own affairs were in a somewhat shakier condition. The situation of his oldest daughter, “my darling Sally,” continued to depress him. She and Abraham Pereira Mendes had moved to Leicester with him, and the couple had taken a small house near Aaron’s. Abraham continued to display his ineptitude and poor health through one or two other business ventures in which his father-in-law tried to place him. For a while he was in the candle business, and was no good at that either. Finally, which was best, Abraham was given nothing to do. Ten years after their marriage, Sally Lopez Mendes gave birth to a tiny son, on whom she doted. It began to be said that Sally was “touched,” for after the baby’s birth she never set foot

outside her house again—a strange, unhappy woman in an unhappy marriage.

Late in May, 1782, Aaron Lopez started out for Newport in his sulky. About five miles outside Providence, at a place called Scotts' Pond, he stopped to water his horse. Suddenly the horse stepped out of its depth and the sulky came plunging after him into the pond. Aaron Lopez was flung forward, out of the sulky. He could not swim, and the servant who tried to swim after him was unable to rescue him before he drowned. He was fifty-one years old.

Learning of his death, Ezra Stiles, who was by now president of Yale, extolled him as

that amiable, benevolent, most hospitable & very respectable Gentleman Mr. Aaron Lopez ... a merchant of the first eminence; for Honor & Extent of Commerce probably surpassed by no Merchant in America. He did business with the greatest ease and clearness—always carried about a Sweetness of Behavior, a calm Urbanity, an agreeable & unaffected Politeness of manners. Without a single Enemy & the most universally beloved by an extensive Acquaintance of any man I ever knew. His beneficence to his Family Connexions, to his Nation, and to all the World is almost without a parallel. He was my intimate Friend & Acquaintance!

The fact that much of Aaron Lopez' business was the business of slavery appears to have made little difference to the noted educator and antislavery preacher. Stiles, apparently, was against slavery in the abstract, while quite aware that a number of his intimate friends and acquaintances made their money in it. He did, however, find it quite difficult to reconcile the long list of glowing qualities he attributed to Mr. Lopez with the fact that Aaron Lopez was a Jew. His eulogy continues: "Oh! How often have I wished that sincere, pious, and candid mind could have perceived the evidence of Xtianity, perceived the Truth as it is in Jesus Christ, known that JESUS was the MESSIAH predicted by Moses and the Prophets!" He then goes on to pray that those in charge of heaven will perhaps overlook Aaron Lopez' Jewishness and admit him anyway, despite his "delusions," into "Paradise on the Xtian System, finding Grace with the all benevolent and adorable

Emanuel who with his expiring breath & in his deepest agonies, prayed for those who knew not what they did.”

The size of Aaron Lopez’ estate was respectable for its day, but hardly what it might have been had it not been for his extensive hospitality during the Leicester years. And when it became divided between his youthful wife and that vast horde of seventeen children, his fortune began to seem a disappointing one. Each child received an inheritance of about eighty thousand dollars.

When, around 1858, Longfellow visited the old Jewish cemetery at Newport, he was so moved by the experience that he wrote a poem about it. “How strange it seems!” he wrote, “These Hebrews in their graves,/Close by the street of this fair seaport town/ .../The very names recorded here are strange .../Alvares and Rivera interchange/With Abraham and Jacob of old times....” Longfellow mused:

*How came they here? What burst of Christian hate,
What persecution, merciless and blind,
Drove o’er the sea—the desert desolate—
These Ishmaels and Hagers of mankind?
They lived in narrow streets and lanes obscure,
Ghetto and Judenstrass, in murk and mire; *
Taught in the school of patience to endure
The life of anguish and the death of fire....*

Aaron Lopez was among those who reposed there during Mr. Longfellow’s visit.

* Longfellow obviously was not too clear on the living conditions of Jews in medieval Spain.

MISALLIANCES AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS

As more Ashkenazic Jews trickled in from Germany and central Europe, they found that the Sephardic culture, tradition, and form were what prevailed among Jews in America. The newcomers were accepted—albeit a trifle disdainfully—into the Sephardic synagogues, and became, as it were, honorary Sephardim. The Sephardic Old Guard made it quite clear to the Johnny-come-latelys that their elevated status was being bestowed upon them without being actually earned. No small degree of social difference existed between the “new” Sephardim and the authentic Sephardim, and this was not helped by the fact that the “rough-spoken” (meaning they had foreign accents) Germans, finding themselves Sephardic blue bloods in name, if not by inheritance, often took to putting on airs and otherwise pushing themselves forward socially in a way that the Old Guard found thoroughly offensive. It was a case of titled Spaniard versus ghetto German, of third- and fourth-generation American versus foreign-born, of rich versus poor, of the cultivated versus the uncouth. In a situation like this, there were bound to be reactions.

In New Orleans, for example, the general instability of the Jewish community—still predominantly Sephardic, but with an admixture of Ashkenazic “outsiders”—was not helped by a visit from young Mathias Gomez, one of Daniel Gomez’ great-nephews. Mathias got into an argument with a young man of Ashkenazic extraction over, of all things, the correct wording of a quotation from a poem. It seemed terribly trifling, but

not to Mathias when his Ashkenazic acquaintance called him a “fool.” Immediately, Mathias insisted on the aristocratic privilege of challenging the man to a duel. They fought with muskets at forty paces, and each fired four times with no shot reaching a target. Normally, this is considered sufficient exercise to call off a duel, but Mathias insisted on a fifth shot, which wounded his opponent in both legs and killed Mathias himself instantly. He had made his point, however, that nobody, but nobody, should insult a Gomez.

It was said by the Sephardim, who had undergone so much horror and terror for the sake of their faith during the Inquisition, that the Jews of the rest of Europe might be Jewish, but they weren’t very. They were said to lack piety, and to be easily swayed by Christian thinking and Christian methods. A case in point was certainly the New Orleans community. Everything went reasonably well in New Orleans as long as a member of one of the old Spanish families was in charge of the congregation. But when a German suddenly inherited the job of chief rabbi—well, a hundred fifty years later the New Orleans Jewish community still remembers what happened.

He was Albert J. “Roley” Marks, who described himself as a “Part-Time rabbi,” and who actually earned his living as a bit player in southern traveling theatrical companies. He had earned his nickname because one of his best performances was said to be that of Rowley in *The School for Scandal*. He was also of somewhat roly-poly proportions, which made the sobriquet appropriate. He was once described by a contemporary as:

a little *below* the middle size, measuring in his stockings, about four feet and some inches. A gleam of good humor is always beaming on his countenance, except when he experiences a twinge of the gout (unfortunately pretty often), and he is one of the best-natured fellows in existence.

“Roley” Marks’s acting range was considerably limited by his size. His specialty parts were comic old men, and he was famous for a way he had of laughing on stage. “It would do your heart good to see one of his laughs,” a critic of one of his performances wrote. “I say *see* one of them, for nothing in particular is heard when he laughs; a sort of turning up of his eyes, a

filling up of his cheeks with wind, and suddenly letting it burst forth, at the same time giving himself a half turn, stooping as if to spit, indulging in a sly wink at the public, and swinging his cane about—and it is done.” He performed in such popular dramas of the day as *Governor Heartall*, *Old Smacks*, and *Andrew Mucklestane*. Of his performance in the title role of the latter, the same critic wrote:

Andrew Mucklestane! Ah! How often have I witnessed his impersonation of this character, which is nothing more or less than a sentimental Scotch fisherman, very benevolent in his feelings, and ever ready to rescue runaway countesses and drowning children! And to see Rowley sweating through the “business” of this character is a treat to all lovers of the romantic drama. Rowley introduces thirteen *falls* in his performance, and more than once has it been found necessary to prop the stage before subjecting it to his energetic manoeuvres....

How did such a charming buffoon manage to become chief rabbi of the Sephardic congregation in a sophisticated city like New Orleans? Apparently his good nature won the congregation over in a weak moment, and he was given the job. He also worked as a part-time inspector at the customhouse and as a fireman. He was made a director of the Firemen’s Charitable Association, helped it put on burlesques and reviews for fundraising purposes, and composed a ditty called “The Fireman’s Song,” in return for which the City of New Orleans appointed him “Poet Laureate of the Firemen.”

His antics, however, were somewhat differently regarded by the Sephardic elders of the synagogue, who began referring to him as “a stain on the Jewish clergy.” It was reported that “Roley” Marks did not keep the dietary laws, that he had not bothered to have his sons circumcised, and that at one point, on the festival of Purim, he found himself too busy with other activities to conduct the services. At last, during a Rosh Hashanah service, an older member of the congregation rose boldly to his feet and announced to the assemblage that it was a disgrace that a man should act as rabbi “who did not have his sons initiated into the covenant of Abraham,” and who “got beastly drunk on the day when his two sons died.” This was too much for

even “Roley” Marks’s good nature. He banged his fists on the pulpit and shouted, “*By Jesus Christ! I have a right to pray!*”

It would have been easier to blame “Roley” Marks’s outrageous behavior on his “low” Ashkenazic origins if it could have been claimed that the “old” Sephardic members of the New Orleans synagogue were all, to a man, acting on their best behavior. Alas, many were not. There was the case of Victor Souza, of pure Spanish bloodlines on both sides (his mother was a Pereira), who became engaged to a girl named Rose Bourdeaux, a Catholic. Nineteen days before the marriage, Victor underwent Roman Catholic baptism and the pair were married by Père Antoine in New Orleans’ Saint Louis Cathedral. This did not prevent Victor Souza’s being identified as an “Israelite” in the church records several years later, and the scandal of his intermarriage was as nothing compared with the announcement, not long afterward, that he and his partner, Decadie Baiz—another member of an “old” Sephardic family that had distinguished connections both in New York and on the island of Saint Thomas—had “absconded and defrauded their creditors whom they have shamefully deceived.” A thousand dollars was offered for the capture of the pair, or five hundred dollars for either, and the Catholic convert was described in the “Wanted” poster:

Victor Souza, a Jew, is about 4 feet 11 inches high, has a large face, large nose and a small mouth; his face is red and his beard strong and black. D. Baiz, a Jew, about 5 feet 3 or 4 inches high, full face and pock marked, strong black beard....

Victor Souza was caught, tried for fraud, convicted, and sent to prison.

The business feuds between those of Ashkenazic origins and the Sephardim were probably the worst of all, even though the men were all of one, supposedly unifying, congregation. One of the most disgraceful battles in New Orleans took place between Mr. Solomon Audler and Mr. L. A. Levy, Jr. The Audlers had come from Germany, and had made some money manufacturing something called Asiatic Lenitive, a ninety-proof patent medicine advertised “for the cure of toothaches, headaches, and other diseases.” Solomon Audler also ran a leather and dry goods store. The Mr. Levy was one of several Sephardic Levy families who were now scattered up and down the Atlantic Coast. The quarrel was over an overcoat.

It seems that a certain Mr. Phillips (also old Sephardic) was selling a consignment of linen overcoats at auction, and he had promised his friend Levy a coat, if any were left over, at the same price the coats had brought at auction. After the auction, when Levy went to Phillips' establishment to look over the remainder from the sale, he could not find an overcoat that fit him. So he—rather high-handedly, it seems—exchanged one of the remaining coats for a coat that *did* fit him out of a pile of coats purchased by Mr. Audler. Levy then paid Phillips for the coat. When Mr. Audler found out about the switch in coats he was not amused. He had, after all, made his selection of coat sizes with a reason. So he sent Mr. Levy a bill for the coat, which Levy, seeing no need to pay for his coat twice, refused to pay. Audler then sued Levy for the price of the coat, lost his suit, and, in a fury, stormed Mr. Levy at his place of business and called Levy a thief. Immediately Levy challenged Audler to a duel, but Audler haughtily refused the challenge, saying that Levy was “not a gentleman and therefore not entitled to satisfaction.” Levy promptly ordered a handbill printed and distributed in the streets, which proclaimed:

Notice to the public.... S. Audler having gravely insulted me this morning ... I deem it my duty in justice to my reputation, to state to the public, that my friends called upon the said individual for satisfaction, which he did not grant, I hereby proclaim him to the public, as a coward, and no gentleman, and beneath the notice of the community.

The tempest in a teapot continued to escalate. Audler, not to be put down by mere handbills, took an advertisement in the newspaper in which he demanded to know:

I have been required to give gentlemanly satisfaction, to whom? I would ask—to a man? a gentleman? No! it is to one who cannot prove himself a gentleman, for the act of which he stands charged by me cannot be termed the act of a gentleman. A man he is not; it needs but a glance to perceive it; he was well aware at the time he wrote the challenge that he could not obtain a gentlemanly satisfaction from me, otherwise he would not have demanded it.

Audler ran his advertisement not only in New Orleans but also—doubtless to impress his friends and relatives—in the newspapers of New York and Philadelphia as well. Levy, not to be outdone, added the city of Charleston to the list of cities in which he ran *his* advertisement, which contained this sort of frenzied invective:

This self-same Audler—this vendor of worn-out harness—this wash-tub dealer has the impudence and characteristic daring inherent in triflers called me ... “a Thief” ... Sol Audler!!! and who does not shrink at the very letters of his name. He *has* been *is* and *ever will be* the detestation of the honest man, the land mark for the Coward, the beacon for the Insolvent debtor, the light house for the smuggler ... Oznaburgs, Italian silk cottonades, old swords and belts &c. &c. groan loudly a requiem for the ledger of his poor creditors ... this blackened lump of infamy ... the public must condemn him for calling *me* a Thief when he himself is so notoriously known as an adept in the business....

Well. A good lawyer must have seen that Audler had a cause for action after being subjected to that sort of public abuse. But Audler, at this point—perhaps aware of the amusement the word battle was creating up and down the eastern seaboard—chose politely to withdraw with the calmly worded announcement that “after a long residence in this city (I flatter myself without reproach) ... my reputation cannot suffer in the opinion of an impartial public, by the slanderous and unfounded accusations of such a worthless fellow as Levy.” Therewith the battle ended, as both parties withdrew to their tents to lick their wounds.

At the same time, when an Ashkenazic Jew married one of the Sephardim, there were almost certain to be troubles, as happened in New Orleans to Samuel Jacobs (German) and his wife, Rosette (Sephardic), a Spanish-tempered lady who spoke sneeringly of her husband’s “peasant” ancestry, even though Germany’s Jews were somewhat worse off than the peasants. It was not long before readers of the *Louisiana Gazette* were titillated to see the following paid notice:

CAUTION. Whereas my wife Rosette has left my house without any just cause whatever, this is to caution the public not to trust her on my account,

as I will not pay any debts contracted by her.

A month later, Mr. Jacobs published a retraction to the above, saying that it had all been “merely through a mistake,” and adding, “I have the pleasure to let the public know that we live in perfect harmony.” Despite this claim, however, the marriage continued to be a stormy one and, in less than a year, the couple were granted a legal separation, one of the first in Louisiana history and a great rarity in its days—particularly in a Jewish marriage.

When word of these scandalous goings-on in New Orleans reached the ears of Jews in such staid northern cities as New York and Newport, the reaction was one of shock and dismay. The fabric of Jewish life in New Orleans seemed to be flying apart, and this was something that Jews in the North could not accept with equanimity. Many of the New Orleans Jewish families were the northerners’ close relatives. A close tie between Newport and New Orleans, for example, lay in the person of Judah Touro, the man whose celebrated will has made him something of a legend among American Jewish philanthropists.

The Touros were an old Spanish family who came to Newport by way of the West Indies, and Isaac Touro—the first to arrive—was immediately taken in by Jacob Rivera and Aaron Lopez, and made a member of Newport’s exclusive Jewish club. Isaac Touro, along with Lopez and Rivera, was among those who drew up the plans for Newport’s famous synagogue in 1759, and Isaac was the one selected to perform the dedication of the building when it was completed four years later. The building (which has since been renamed the Touro Synagogue and designated a national historic site) contains an architectural detail that is a haunting reminder of the Marrano past of its builders, and the dangers their ancestors faced if they wished to practice their faith in Inquisitional Spain. The plans call for “a few small stairs which lead from the altar in the center, to a secret passage in the basement”—for escape.

Isaac Touro married a Hays, another old Sephardic family,* and their daughter married one of Aaron Lopez’ many sons, thus bringing the Touros, who had been merely friends, into the Lopez-Gomez-Rivera family complex.

Just what brought Isaac Touro’s son Judah to New Orleans is something of a mystery. Since Judah Touro has become a legend, his life has suffered

the fate of so much that is Jewish legend—distortion, and expansion out of all proportion to the facts at hand. Since he did indeed become a very rich man, and since he did write a famous will, leaving a fortune to different charities, Jewish legend makers have tended to have it that he was one of New Orleans' best-loved figures, that the entire city went into mourning when he died, and so on.

The facts indicate that Judah Touro was actually not well liked in the southern city, that he was an odd little man who may not have been even very bright, a recluse, a string saver, a nineteenth-century Collyer brother. It has been said that he left his native Newport because of blighted love, that he loved a beautiful cousin, and that his stern old uncle Moses Hays (his mother's brother) refused to let his daughter marry such a close relation. One version of the tale has it that he left Newport because of the death of this cousin, Rebecca Hays. Actually, Rebecca died nine months after he left.

Another version insists that the cousin was not Rebecca but her sister Catherine, and that Uncle Moses would not let *them* wed. And yet Uncle Moses Hays died a few days after Judah Touro arrived in New Orleans. With the opposition out of the way, wouldn't this have been the moment for him to hurry home and claim his love, or for her to run to him? It is true that neither Catherine Hays nor Judah ever married, and that they never set eyes on each other again. A romantic story exists that, throughout their lives, the two corresponded in a long series of love letters, and that in these letters the lovers never aged, that they wrote to each other as if they were both still teen-agers, even in their seventies speaking of "your tiny dancing feet and glancing eyes." It may be true, but no one has ever discovered this remarkable correspondence. It is said that in the delirium of his last illness Judah Touro "talked of walking in a beautiful garden with Catherine Hays, his first and only love." Perhaps, but just to whom he spoke these words is not recorded. He did, it is true, leave her a small sum of money in his will, apparently unaware that she had died a few days before he signed this document.

In any case, he did indeed, as a young man, move permanently from his native Newport to New Orleans. There *may* have been a falling out with his uncle Moses, because Judah did not come, as might have been expected, to represent his uncle's business. He came independently, as a loner, and set himself up in business as a loner. He became a commission merchant, and

his earliest advertisements show him dealing in such diverse merchandise as beer, herring, lobster, butter, cigars, candles, soap, nuts, and Holland gin. He prospered, in a modest way.

The man who may have known Judah Touro best, an executor of the famous will, considered him a most peculiar man. He wrote, "Mr. Touro is the very impersonation of a snail, not to say of a crab whose progress (to use a paradox) is usually backward.... I must be very careful to humor him ... he is very *slow*... You know he is a strange man." In business Judah Touro was hesitant, indecisive, never adventuresome or imaginative. And yet he was successful. He was by no means the most successful commission merchant in New Orleans. He was not even the most successful Jewish commission merchant. And yet, little by little, he was becoming very rich, and, little by little, the rest of New Orleans began to suspect this fact and to study him with new interest. What was his formula to riches? It was simply that he didn't spend. The fortune Judah Touro was amassing was coming to him penny by hard penny, and he was squirreling it away in banks. As a rabbi acquaintance explained it:

Mr. T. was not a man of brilliant mind; on the contrary, he was slow and not given to bursts of enthusiasm, as little as he was fond of hazardous speculations; and he used to say that he could only be said to have *saved* a fortune by strict economy, while others had spent one by their liberal expenditures ... he had no tastes for the wasteful outlay of means on enjoyments which he had no relish for. He had thus the best wines always by him, without drinking them himself; his table, whatever delicacies it bore, had only plain and simple food for him....

His existence was solitary. For most of his life he lived in a series of cheap rooming houses on the wrong side of town, at a time when other New Orleans rich men were trying to outdo each other by building elaborate mansions. Only late in life did he permit himself the luxury of buying a small house. When he bought real estate, it was as an investment. He never sold anything, and his real estate, in a growing city, tended to appreciate over the years. He was a hoarder, but only of the barest necessities of life. He shunned possessions to such an extent that, when he died and his estate was appraised, only \$1,960 was assigned to personal property. This

included silverware valued at \$805 and \$600 worth of wine—wine seems to have been his sole personal indulgence—and \$555 worth of crockery, glassware, office furniture, his carpets, hat stand, bedspread, and chairs. His personal estate was valued at \$928,774.74—doubtless an extremely low appraisal. Though the sum is not staggering by today’s standards, there were probably only ten Americans in Judah Touro’s day who were worth as much.

Judah Touro, according to the legend, gave away a fortune in private philanthropies during his lifetime. If true, he must have given anonymously, adhering to the Talmudic exhortation that “Twice blessed is he who gives in secret.” He also, according to the legend, gave away the entire \$80,000 fortune he inherited from his sister, Rebecca Touro Lopez, who died before him. This appears not to be true since no record of any such bequest exists in the various papers pertaining to Mrs. Lopez’ estate. The plain fact is that, during his lifetime, Judah Touro evinced no interest in philanthropy whatever, and seemed obsessed only with the making and saving of money.

What prompted him, in the end, to give it all away remains another puzzle. But two weeks before his death he sat down and wrote his famous will. In sixty-five separate bequests, Judah Touro gave away money, in sums ranging from three thousand to twenty thousand dollars, to a long list of charitable causes throughout the eastern United States, from the orphans of Boston to the Ladies Benevolent Society in New Orleans. The Jewish congregations of Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, Mobile, Savannah, Montgomery, Memphis, Louisville, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Saint Louis, Buffalo, Albany—and, of course, New York and Newport—all received bequests.

In Boston, Touro’s name is now associated with Massachusetts General Hospital, the Asylum for Indigent Boys, the Female Orphan Asylum, the Humane Society, and many other charities. To New Orleans he left funds to combat yellow fever, which was in those days endemic, and a hospital—the Touro Infirmary—was established in that connection. A bequest to Newport’s “Old Stone Mill,” also known as the Newport Tower, saved that venerable structure from demolition by the city fathers, and he also left funds to the City of Newport for a public park to be laid out around the tower. This plot is now known as Touro Park.

All in all, a grand total of \$483,000 went to charities. It was, indeed, the greatest display of philanthropic largesse the new world had ever seen. Thus, his death being the most significant act of his life, Judah Touro entered history, and legend.

The balance of his estate, after all the charitable bequests were paid, was directed to go to “my dear, old and devoted friend,” Mr. Rezin Davis Shepherd. When serving in the Louisiana Militia during the Battle of New Orleans, Judah Touro had been wounded in the thigh by a shell, and it was Shepherd who carried him off the field to a doctor, and whom Touro always credited with saving his life. Shepherd, whose great-great-grandson is Senator Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts, received between \$500,000 and \$750,000 under Touro’s will—again a huge sum at the time—and this windfall is one of the cornerstones of the Boston Saltonstalls’ family fortune.

One of the elements of the Judah Touro legend is that he was an early pioneer for civil rights, and frequently bought Negro slaves only to set them free. Alas, there is no proof of this, either, although there is evidence that he did not trade in slavery as extensively as his southern contemporaries, and that he had a genuine aversion for the trade in which his sister’s husband’s family, the Lopezes, had made so much money. On the other hand, a timid trader, he didn’t trade in *anything* extensively.

There are, however, two quite intriguing pieces of information in this regard that turned up after Judah Touro’s death. One was the discovery that a certain Ellen Wilson, identified as an “F.W.C.” (Free Woman of Color, in southern parlance), had had a house purchased for her in Judah Touro’s name. Among his effects, a note to this same woman in the amount of \$4,100 was found. Ellen Wilson, who may have already died, never came forward to claim her inheritance, and has never been identified.

The second fact is that Pierre André Destrac Cazenove, appointed by Judah as one of the executors of his will, and one of its beneficiaries—Cazenove received a \$10,000 gift—was a mulatto. Little is known about Cazenove, except that he was some forty-eight years younger than Judah Touro, that he had once worked for Judah as a clerk and was described as a great “pet” of Mr. Touro’s. At the time of Touro’s death, young Cazenove was reportedly worth some \$20,000, quite a lot for a black man in the antebellum South. By the time of the Civil War, Cazenove and his four sons

were operating a funeral parlor and livery stable, and were said to be worth \$100,000. The Cazenove family were described as “Quadroons—Creoles, more properly now called colored persons.”

It is astonishing that when the contents of Judah Touro’s will were made public—and made headlines in newspapers all over America—no mention was made of the startling fact that Touro had named a “colored person” as one of his executors, yet none was. Was this a fact deliberately suppressed, in order that the good Judah had done through his bequests should not be sullied by some sort of interracial scandal? Was Ellen Wilson actually Judah Touro’s mistress? Such alliances were certainly not unheard of, but would have been considered by the press unsuitable for public consumption. Was the romantically named Pierre André Destrac Cazenove, then, of whom Judah Touro was so fond, one of the few men he could trust to execute his will, actually Judah Touro’s son? And who was *John* Touro, who appeared in New Orleans between 1855 and 1865, not long after Judah Touro’s death? None of his known relatives ever followed him there. All these questions can now be only the subject of speculation.

With all the embellishments of the legend that have grown around this odd little man, Jews today proudly point out to their children that America’s first philanthropist on any important scale was a Jew. Sephardim today remind *their* children that Judah Touro was a Sephardic Jew, “one of us,” with all his credentials in order. Judah Touro rests, along with all the puzzles and questions about his life, in the Jewish cemetery in his native Newport, with all his relatives. But what the purveyors of the legend do not tell their children—what many of them, in fact, do not know—is that many of Judah Touro’s benefactions were to Christian causes. At one point, for example, when the First Congregational Church of New Orleans was having financial difficulties, and was about to be torn down, Judah Touro bought the church for \$20,000 and then gave the building back to the congregation.

But Congregationalism was never quite his cup of tea. Quite early on, after his arrival in New Orleans, he rented a pew at Christ Church, and became an Episcopalian.

Meanwhile, farther north, in Philadelphia, another Sephardic Jew was becoming the center of a storm of controversy and the basis of a legend. Haym Salomon, his family and other admirers were claiming, had actually

“financed the American Revolution” by presenting General George Washington with a large personal loan at a crucial moment. Salomon’s detractors, meanwhile, were saying in loud voices that he had done no such thing. Once more, as in the case of Judah Touro, the extent of Jewish contribution to the course of American history was under examination.

From the beginning, of course, the spirit that guided the American Revolution had strong Judaic overtones. The Old Testament had become, in many ways, a Revolutionary textbook. For one thing, the Puritans of Colonial New England considered themselves the spiritual offspring of Old Testament characters. Like the Jews, they gave their children Old Testament names. It was to the Old Testament that the Puritans turned to find God. They regarded the New Testament as merely the story of Christ. In England, the Puritans had been called “Jewish fellow travelers,” and they had compared their flight to America with the Jews’ escape from Egypt. They called the Massachusetts Bay Colony “the New Jerusalem.” There was a proposal that Hebrew be made the official language of the Colonies (it was on the regular curriculum, along with Latin and Greek, when Harvard was founded, a knowledge of the language being considered part of the equipment of a cultivated man). John Cotton had suggested that the Mosaic Code be used as the basis for Massachusetts laws. There is a manifestation of the Code, meanwhile, in the wording of the American Constitution.

Under the oppression of George III, the American colonists likened themselves to the Jews, and the king to the pharaoh. They quoted Samuel, who, when the people of Palestine came clamoring to him for the creation of a Hebrew royal family, raised strong objections to this notion, and the colonists found in his arguments a Biblical authority for their refusal to submit to the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings. In 1775, the Reverend Jonathan Mayhew, a Boston preacher, announced from the pulpit—the most effective medium of communication of the day—that the American colonists were like the people of Israel who resisted the unjust taxation of Solomon’s successor, and the Reverend Samuel Langdon, president of Harvard, preached that just as ancient Israel was wrong to take a king for itself, so were the colonists wrong to accept a king who was a tyrant. Aaron Lopez’ friend President Ezra Stiles of Yale delivered a sermon in which he traced the evolution of the democratic form of government from Palestine to America. He called America “God’s American Israel,” and George

Washington “the American Joshua,” called forth by God to set His people free.

The first Independence Day was something very close to a Jewish holiday. On July 4, 1776, the day that the great Declaration was officially published, the Continental Congress appointed a committee of three—Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Adams, and Thomas Jefferson—and asked them to prepare a seal for the United States of America. The design chosen by the committee depicted Pharaoh, crowned, in an open chariot, with a sword in his hand, passing through the divided waters of the Red Sea in pursuit of the Israelites. On the opposite shore stood Moses bathed in light from a pillar of fire, extending his hands toward the sea and bidding the waters to close and swallow Pharaoh. The legend emblazoned upon the seal was: “Rebellion against tyranny is obedience to God.” The theme, of course, was freedom, and this first Great Seal of the United States seems somewhat more appropriate than the present, more warlike seal, with its fierce eagle clutching a handful of arrows.

Haym Salomon, meanwhile, who may or may not have “financed” the Revolution, was a member in good standing of two Sephardic congregations—Shearith Israel in New York and, later on, when his activities were centered there, Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia. He had, however, been born in Poland—around 1740—and this fact, of course, made him Sephardic second class. In America, after his arrival in 1772, he made an auspicious marriage, to Rachel Franks, daughter of Moses Franks of Philadelphia. Frankses—the name had been Franco in Spain—were a prominent mercantile family in both Philadelphia and New York, and families such as the Gomezes, Lopezes, and “old” Levys considered the Franks family “one of us.” At the time of his marriage to Miss Franks, Haym Salomon was thirty-seven. His bride was fifteen. Still, this alliance considerably elevated his social position in the Jewish community.

He also had acquired, before leaving Europe, a university education, which was unusual for a young Polish Jew in the late eighteenth century. He spoke a number of languages, including, as he once mentioned offhandedly in a letter, “French, Polish, Russian, Italian, etc. Languages.” He also spoke Hebrew, and Yiddish—a tongue the old Sephardic families had only vaguely heard of.

Despite his educated tastes, he first set himself up in New York as a dry goods merchant and, in 1776, Leonard Gansevoort, himself a prominent store owner, recommended young Salomon to Philip Schuyler, who commanded the troops of the Northern Department in upper New York State, and asked that Salomon be allowed “to go suttling to Lake George,” that is, to accompany the troops and provide them with clothing, provisions, whiskey, and such. Gansevoort wrote to Schuyler: “I can inform the General that Mr. Salomon has hitherto sustained the Character of being warmly attached to America.” He followed the troops through most of that summer, returned to New York in September, and when, on September 15, 1776, the British captured New York, Haym Salomon was one of a group of men who formed a dangerous plan to send fire ships into the Narrows of New York harbor to destroy the British fleet. The plan was discovered, and Haym Salomon was arrested as a spy.

Whether or not he was sentenced to be shot by a firing squad is another point widely disputed within and without the now extensive Salomon family, and among historians of the Revolution. Salomon’s son, who may have had reasons to exaggerate certain aspects of his father’s career, always insisted that the threat of death was there. In the only existing description of the event by Haym Salomon himself, he makes no mention of this. He became, however, a valuable prisoner. With his knowledge of languages he was able to communicate with a motley assortment of other prisoners, which included mercenary soldiers Britain had hired from all over Europe to fight its war, and Salomon was assigned the job of prison interpreter.

He must have done his job well, for he was eventually released. In 1778, threatened with arrest again, he fled to Philadelphia, where he decided to remain since he possessed “principles repugnant to British hostilities,” as he put it in his somewhat flowery style.

In Philadelphia, he wasted no time before appealing to the Continental Congress for a job, citing in his letter his past services to the Revolution, and informing the Congress that he had left behind him all his “Effects and credits to the amount of five or six thousand pounds sterling and [a] distressed Wife and Child of a month old at New York, waiting that they may soon have an opportunity to come out from thence with empty hands.” Robert Morris, the Philadelphia financier who had founded the Bank of North America—and whose personal credit at one point during the war was

better than the government's—took Salomon on and assigned him to negotiate war loans. What this amounted to was going out into the market and selling the infant government's bonds. He was so good at this that soon he was being called “the most successful of the war brokers,” and, though he charged only a modest $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 percent for his services, his account at the Bank of North America grew until it was nearly as large as Robert Morris'. With hands no longer empty, he sent for his wife and child, and the family settled comfortably on Philadelphia's Front Street.

He dealt in other goods than government securities, as is apparent in a letter that survives, written to a merchant in Virginia and advising that “The hats are so much higher than you judged that I shall defer sending them till I hear from you. They cannot be got for less than 10½ dollars. Silk stockings are also high and scarce, and am afraid shall not be able to send the quantity you want. Goods are grown scarce, and from the number of vessels we have lost, and our capes now swarming with enemy cruisers, we expect they [the goods] will rise considerably.” Wartime inflation was on, but still the amounts Salomon dealt in were not impossibly large. In this same letter he adds: “The forty dollars in favor of Robert B. Chew I have paid.”

In 1781, he was prosperous enough to send off a draft in the amount of a thousand pounds to his family in Poland. This turned out to have been an unwise move. The minute his relatives in Europe discovered that they had an affluent kinsman on the other side of the Atlantic, they descended upon him in droves, hat in hand. Haym Salomon found to his dismay that he had more aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, and cousins in more corners of the Continent than he had ever imagined, and that they all expected to be put on allowances. Furthermore, as Jewish relatives have always tended to do, they did not simply *ask* for their share of their cousin's wealth. They demanded it as their right, and were highly indignant when they were turned down. By 1783, Haym Salomon had clearly begun to weary of their petitions, and we see him writing to an itinerant uncle in England: “I have ordered fifty guilders to be paid you by Mr. Gumble Samson in Amsterdam, which letter giving that order you must already have rec'd, and I now send you an order for six guineas.” As patiently as possible he tries to outline his financial situation to his uncle:

Your bias of my riches are too extensive. Rich I am not, but the little I have, think it my duty to share with my poor father and mother. They are the first that are to be provided for by me, and must and shall have the preference. Whatever little more I can squeeze out I will give my relations, but I tell you plainly and truly that it is not in my power to give you or any relations yearly allowances. Don't you nor any of them expect it. Don't fill your mind with vain and idle expectations and golden dreams that never will nor can be accomplished. Besides my father and mother, my wife and children must be provided for. I have three young children, and as my wife is very young may have more, and if you and the rest of my relatives will consider things with reason, they will be sensible of this I now write. But notwithstanding this I mean to assist my relations as far as lays in my power.

His uncle had mentioned coming to America, where, without doubt, he expected to be put on the payroll. Haym wrote him indignantly:

I am much surprised at your intention of coming here. Your *yikes* [family background and education] is worth very little here, nor can I imagine what you mean to do here. I think your duty calls for your going to your family, and besides these six guineas you will receive in Amsterdam fifty guineas from Mr. Gumble Samson.... *I desire no relation may be sent*. Have I not children, are they not relations? When I shall be fully informed of all the young people of our family and their qualifications explained, I may then perhaps advise sending one or two to this country. I will explain to you the nature of this country: *vinig yidishkayt* ["little Jewishness"].

He had a sense of humor, and was capable of writing gossipy letters, too, as he did to a friend whom he accused of not keeping him posted, twitting him that doubtless "your whole time is devoted to the ladies, and can't spare time to inform a friend of your welfare.... I doubt if the ladies here have the same reason to complain of your neglect. Am certain you would not make it long before your return, was you to know how desirous the ladies are of your presence. And one in particular who wishes that no pecuniary views may get the better of the partiality you always entertained for her...."

He was proud of his position as the Revolution's leading—and best—banker, and he guarded this position jealously. Other Jewish brokers were doing what Haym Salomon was doing, buying and selling government notes. These included Isaac Franks, Benjamin Nones, and Lion Moses, but Salomon did the biggest amount of business and, in 1782, he asked Robert Morris for permission to advertise himself as “Broker to the Office of Finance.” Morris gave him permission to use this prestigious title, noting in his diary: “This broker has been usefull to the public interest, and requests leave to publish himself as broker to the office which I have consented, as I do not see that any disadvantage can possibly arise to the public service but the reverse, and he expects individual benefits therefrom”—benefits, of course, in respect to his competition. In his advertisements, Haym Salomon frequently made such statements as one which announced that the advertiser “flatters himself that his assiduity, punctuality, and extensive connections in business, as a broker, is well established in various parts of Europe, and in the United States in particular.” He continued to buy and sell on commission tobacco, sugar, tea, silk stockings, and ladies' bonnets. But he summed himself up in a letter to a London merchant when he said: “My business is a broker, and chiefly in bills of exchange, and so very extensive that I am generally known to the mercantile part of North America.” All this is most certainly true.

On Yom Kippur eve, 1779—it is said—Washington's armies were in desperate straits. His soldiers had not been paid for several months, they were at the point of mutiny, and battle was at hand. Washington pleaded with his men, then threatened, but they were adamant; they would fight no more without their wages. At last a desperate Washington sent a messenger on horseback through the night to Philadelphia with instructions to obtain, from Haym Salomon, a loan of \$400,000, an enormous sum in those days, to pay and provision his troops. The messenger found Salomon in the synagogue, and a hasty whispered conference took place. Salomon rose and quickly moved about the synagogue, collecting certain friends. A small group left together, and that night the money was raised. Did Haym Salomon *himself* contribute \$240,000 of the money? So the legend, perpetuated in many accounts, insists.

It is at this point, alas, that the story of Haym Salomon dissolves into speculation and controversy. Did he, as his son later claimed, loan “vast

sums” to the government, personally pay soldiers’ salaries, and pay for the Revolution? There is no proof of it. He did, however, extend personal loans to many prominent individuals of the Revolution and members of the Continental Congress, including James Wilson, General St. Clair, Edmund Randolph, and many Philadelphians, and often charged them no interest. Presidents Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe were all aided by him at one time or another when short of ready cash. Poor Madison was perennially in financial difficulties and in 1782 wrote to his friend Edmund Randolph: “I cannot in any way make you more sensible of the importance of your kind attention to pecuniary remittances for me than by informing you that I have for some time past been a pensioner on the favor of Haym Salomon, a Jew broker.” A few weeks later, Madison was in as bad shape as ever, and Salomon had come to be something more to him than “a Jew broker.” He wrote, again to Randolph:

I am almost ashamed to reiterate my wants so incessantly to you, but they begin to be so urgent that it is impossible to suppress them. The kindness of our little friend in Front Street, near the coffee house, is a fund which will preserve me from extremities, but I never resort to it without great mortification, as he so obstinately rejects all recompense. The price of money is so usurious that he thinks it ought to be extorted from none but those who aim at profitable speculations. To a necessitous delegate he gratuitously spares a supply out of his private stock.

Salomon’s son claimed that his father also aided the Polish patriots Pulaski and Kosciusko with enormous loans, but there is no proof of this either. He did, however, when the British fleet cut off all communication with Europe, maintain the Spanish ambassador to the Revolutionary government, Don Francesco Randon, out of his own funds. And it can be argued, from this, that a vital service was performed, since, had Salomon not done so, Spain *might* have damaged American prestige—such as it was—abroad. And it is known that he did sell hundreds of thousands of dollars’ worth of American bonds, which found their way to the bourses of Paris, London, and Frankfurt, and which certainly did much to establish American credit in the world market.

Does the United States government still owe Haym Salomon a huge amount of money? His son, Haym Moses Salomon, always said so, and his many descendants—he had four children, and a multitude of grandchildren—who are scattered about the country in such places as New Orleans; Galveston; Houston; Saint Louis; Ardmore, Oklahoma; and Canton, Kansas, would like to think so, and grow wistful dreaming of the fortune they might split if only they could prove that it existed.

His son's story is this: Between the years 1778 and 1782, Haym Salomon loaned the United States government money in the neighborhood of \$700,000, more than half of which was never repaid. On January 5, 1785, the government sent Haym Salomon a full and complete accounting of all the money it owed him. But it was a Sabbath day and, pious Jew that he was, Salomon refused—though a few years earlier he had supposedly been willing to interrupt high holy day services to help George Washington—to sign the papers until the day of rest and prayer was over. On the next day, Sunday, January 6, before he had a chance to examine the government's statement, he died—a victim of the heart disease he had contracted while a prisoner of the British in New York.

The figure of \$700,000, his son claimed, represented money that had gone through Haym Salomon's bank account, payable to the government of the United States, and this same figure has been given authority in such publications as the *Dictionary of American Biography*, in its sketch on Salomon, as the amount he "loaned" the government. It would have been an extraordinarily large sum in 1782. Salomon *can't* have been that rich. If he had—and, on top of that, supported his family and all his European relatives—he would have been by far the richest man in America. In 1778, he had escaped from New York and arrived in Philadelphia without a penny to his name. How, in four short years' time, would he have possibly amassed so staggering a fortune? It is hard to credit, too, that, just a year after his escape, he could personally have come up with \$240,000 to loan George Washington. His wife's family, the Frankses, was rich, but Rachel Franks Salomon descended from the poor branch.

How reliable was his son? It was from him, too, that biographers learned that Haym Salomon's parents in Poland were "wealthy." But still Salomon thought it needful to send them a thousand pounds when at last he became successful, and in his letter he spoke of his "poor father and mother." In his

will, he provided that his mother be bequeathed a gold chain, and his aged father enough money to purchase a burial plot.

Several years ago, the Federation of Polish Jews of America attempted to have a statue erected in Haym Salomon's memory, citing, among other sources, the *Dictionary of American Biography* account of his services to the Revolution, and saying: "America failed to repay the money he advanced, and now men seek to rob him of his posthumous fame." What the Federation wanted to demonstrate, of course, with their statue, was that there had been Polish Jews in America long before the Czarist pogroms of 1881, and that they had contributed mightily. The chief "robber" of Salomon's posthumous fame was the late historian Max J. Kohler. Kohler called the Poles' project ridiculous, and there was a great deal of angry talk. Kohler was a German Jew, and the mutual antipathy that has existed between the earlier-arrived Germans and the later-arriving Poles and Russians was at the heart of most of it. The project sputtered, with much acrimony, to no conclusion.

Haym Salomon was, in his own words, a broker, a trader of government bonds, an agent. The \$700,000 that may have gone through his account over the four years in question was not his money; it was the government's and represented funds from securities he had sold, deposited, and then turned over to Robert Morris. On these moneys Morris now paid him a tidy commission— $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1 percent. Haym Salomon was also a generous man. Even the remote uncles got their guineas. He was generous, too, to his friends in Philadelphia, offering unsecured loans, loans without interest—generous to a fault. After his death, merchants to whom he had loaned money could not pay. His estate was found to be insolvent. His chief creditor was the Bank of North America, Robert Morris' bank.

His son claimed that the United States government owed Haym Salomon \$354,000—which today, with interest, would be worth in the tens of millions of dollars. His son said the government had come with a detailed statement to that effect. True, his son waited decades after his father's death to make this claim, and after all records had inconveniently been destroyed when the British captured Washington during the War of 1812. Mysteriously, the government never came around with that statement again. The money has never been paid. The papers are gone.

But the Polish Americans did get their statue—not in New York, where they wanted it, but in Chicago. And it is a memorial not to one but to three men. Haym Salomon shares the marble pedestal—and perfectly properly, it would seem—with George Washington and Robert Morris. At the time of the statue’s dedication, President Franklin D. Roosevelt turned to an aide and, in full innocence, asked: “I know who the other two are, but *who ...?*”

To those of the Old Guard Sephardim who had questioned the importance of Haym Salomon’s Revolutionary role, there was always the point that he was “not really Sephardic,” something of an interloper and stealer of Sephardic thunder. Now, however, that his statue stands proudly in Chicago, and in such illustrious company, for all the world to see, most Sephardim prefer to claim him—it seems too bad to give him to the Poles—and Sephardic parents tell their children, “And he was one of us!”

* The Hayses, through the mazelike tracery of Malcolm Stern’s book, over the years became related or “connected” with most of the other old families, down to the recent publisher of the *New York Times*, Arthur Hays Sulzberger.

FIRST LADIES

It comes as a surprise to many people that there are Jewish Daughters of the American Revolution—just as there are Sons—though of course there are. Some of the Old Guard Sephardic families are a little sheepish about being DAR members, to be sure, since that organization has gained a reputation of making members of minority groups feel less than welcome. At the same time, these people keep their little certificates of membership, and show *these* to their children and grandchildren as well.

While men like Haym Salomon were raising and supplying money for Revolutionary coffers, and while Judah Touro was saving his money in New Orleans, a number of Sephardic women were gaining reputations as Revolutionary heroines. There was Mrs. David Hays, for example. Esther Hays and Judah Touro were second cousins by marriage; that is, Esther's husband, David, was a first cousin of Judah's mother. By the time of the Revolution, branches of the Hays family were well established in Newport, New York, Philadelphia, and Richmond, where they can still be found. Esther Hays was an Etting, of the Philadelphia Etings—a Sephardic family that had come to that city as early as 1758, and Etings can still be found *there* (including the painter Emlen Etting, a seventh-generation Philadelphian). Esther Etting had met David Hays through Philadelphia connections, and theirs was the first Hays-Etting union (there would, of course, be others). It was considered an event of great social importance, creating as it did an even stronger tie among the Jewish communities of Philadelphia, New York, and Newport.

David Hays took his bride north to an extensive farm he operated in New York's Westchester County, near what is now the town of Bedford, and here the Revolution found them. The Hayses backed the Revolutionary cause and, one night in the winter of 1779, David Hays received word that a company camped not far from his farm had been surrounded by the British. Food and supplies were running low, and unless help reached them soon, the men would be forced to surrender or starve. With one of his young sons as a helper, Hays volunteered to try to drive a herd of seventy-five of his cattle through the enemy lines to the imperiled troops. He chose a moonless night for his mission. The cows were blindfolded, their jaws tied closed with rope so they could make no noise, and their hoofs wrapped in heavy sacking to muffle the sound of their march through the snow. The greatest risk came from the Hayses' own neighbors, many of whom were Tory sympathizers, and the exploit had to be carried out in utmost secrecy.

Nonetheless, somehow word of what David Hays was up to leaked out. He and his son had no sooner left the house than a group of angry and suspicious Tories gathered outside it, shouting for his wife. Esther Hays, still weak from the birth of her sixth child, had been in bed with a fever, but she rose and went to the door. When asked where her husband was, she refused to say. Even when the Tory group threatened to kill her small children, she refused to give the mob any information. She was then forced back inside her house; the windows and doors were barricaded, and the house was set afire. Fortunately, the Hayses' Negro slaves, who lived nearby, were able to rescue Esther and her children, and carry them to safety in the slave quarters. But when David Hays and his son returned the next morning—after successfully completing their delivery of the cattle—the farmhouse had burned to the ground.

Esther Hays was a woman not easily daunted. She showed her patriotic zeal on another occasion when she calmly walked through enemy lines in broad daylight. Ostensibly on a routine shopping errand, she was actually purveying a vital commodity to the Revolutionary soldiers. Her plump petticoats were heavily quilted with salt. Before the war was over, both Esther's husband and her eldest son had fought at the front, as had her brother, Reuben, who died as a prisoner of war of the British. A volunteer the moment he learned of the first shot at Lexington, Reuben Etting had left his bank clerk's job to join the American forces. After his capture he

refused to eat pork, which, of course, was the chief staple supplied. He must have been as strong-willed as his sister, for his death was attributed to starvation.

A gaudier Revolutionary role, though more social than military, was meanwhile being played by the women of Philadelphia's Franks family, into which the entry—by marriage—had been such an important step for Haym Salomon. It had, in fact, by the time of the Revolution begun to seem as though Philadelphia's Sephardim were taking themselves even more seriously than their relatives in New York and Newport, even though the Philadelphia community was newer than—and in many ways an offshoot of—the other two. Philadelphians generally had begun to think of themselves as superior to New Yorkers, as, of course, they still do. New York and Newport were looked down on as “commercial” cities; Philadelphia was a city more devoted to culture, the arts and graces. Sephardim in the more northerly cities had already begun to speak with a certain awe of their Philadelphia kin, and on one occasion Mrs. Aaron Lopez wrote one of her daughters a long letter (or memorandum, since the girl was living at home at the time) on how to behave: “Not to forget yr. curtsies, how d'you dos and thank-yous,” when meeting “our Philadelphia cousins.”

The Franks family had settled in Philadelphia early in the eighteenth century, along with the Levys, to whom they were distantly related. The family, during its passage from fifteenth-century Spain to eighteenth-century Philadelphia, had been prominent elsewhere. Aaron Franks, grandfather of the first American Franks, had been a banker in Hanover, and, under the aegis of George I, who discovered his talent there, was brought to England as the king's personal financial adviser. He was known as “the Jew Broker of London.” The Levys, meanwhile, could trace their lineage back to a number of prominent early American Jewish families. The two families became even more tightly entwined with each other when, in what was considered a dynastic union, Abigail Levy married Jacob Franks in 1712, and both families moved with great ease (certainly with more ease than the Jews of New York and Newport, who, socially, still kept to themselves) into the purlieus of Christian Philadelphia society. Both David Franks and his cousin, Samson Levy, were on the original list of the Assembly, Philadelphia's most exclusive social event and one of the oldest balls in America, when it was composed in 1748.

By the 1750's, Philadelphia's Jewish elite had added the Gratz family, along with the Ettings, and of course the Philadelphia branch of the Hayses. The Gratzes, like the Ettings and the Frankses, had come from Inquisitional Spain by way of Germany. In Spain, the name may have been Gracia, or Garcia. It was Philadelphia's large German-speaking population that attracted these Sephardim with German-sounding names, who had taken the German route out of Spain, and knew the language. By the mid-eighteenth century, no good Philadelphia club was without its Gratz, Etting, Franks, Levy, or Hays. They were members of the Philadelphia and the Rittenhouse clubs, the Union League, the Racquet, the Rabbit, and the City Troop, and their names decorated the membership lists—and the lists of officers and directors and sponsors—of such august institutions as the Historical Society, the Philosophical Society, the Academy of Art, the Academy of Science, and the Atheneum.

The Frankses and Hayses and Gratzes and Ettings not only married “within the group” but, by the time of the Revolution, had begun making brilliantly social marriages to members of Philadelphia's non-Jewish elite. In the cities to the north, where the Sephardim remained more straitlaced and orthodox, the Philadelphia Jews' behavior was looked on with something close to horror. “The German influence” was blamed for this sort of laxity—the same Christianizing influence that would lead to the Reform movement in Judaism, in both Germany and in the United States. But these intermarriages of Philadelphia's Christian and Jewish families have meant that “Jewish blood,” as they say, flows in the veins of many an old American family, from Philadelphia Morrisises and Newbolds and Ingersolls to the New York Verplancks.

Abigail Levy Franks, meanwhile—she was one half of the first Franks-Levy marriage—was not at all sure she approved of these developments, as she watched them unfold in Philadelphia. Abigail regarded herself as an eighteenth-century aristocratic lady. But in many ways she was also a prototype Jewish mother, so familiar in fiction of modern times. She was forever wrapping up and sending off to her sons packages of preserved relishes and “smoakt fish,” urging them not to forget to bathe regularly and eat three good meals daily. In correspondence to her son Naphtali Franks, covering the years 1733–1748, she repeatedly scolds him for his failure to write, or for spending too much money on gifts and “entertainments.”

Addressing him always as “Heartsey” (not only a term of endearment, but also a play on her son’s middle name, which was Hart), she was fond of delivering Polonius-like pronouncements and advice. “You are now launched out amongst strangers,” she told him upon his arrival in England on a business trip. “You must be exceeding circumspect in your conduct, be affable to all men but not credulous, nor too soon be led away by fair speeches. Be likewise a very just observer of your word in all respects, even in ye most trivial matters.” She was a woman from whom it was not difficult to obtain an opinion, whether it was on the quality of a certain medicinal water or which was the “best Scotch snuff.” She deplored the split between the Sephardic and the Ashkenazic Jewish communities (in New York, she had heard, Sephardic Jews were all in the East Ward, and Ashkenazic Jews were in the less fashionable Dock Ward). She disliked the noise of eighteenth-century horse-drawn traffic in the city, and complained of the gaming and drinking that went on “from Sunday night to Saturday morning.” She called the ladies of her synagogue a “stupid set of people.” She was literate, and fond of quoting, often inaccurately and in the erratic spelling that was typical of the age, advice from the contemporary novels of Fielding and Smollett, and from the essays of Dryden, Addison, and her favorite, Pope. She directed “Heartsey” that “Two mornings a week should be entirely untill dinner time dedicated to some useful book besides an hour every week to that purpose.”

She was preoccupied with finding a suitable mate for each of her seven children, and marital matters take up much of the space in her letters to her son. She quotes Heartsey the little verse, the source of which is unknown:

*Man the first happy favourite above,
When heaven endowed him with a power to love.
His God ne'er thought him in a blessed state
Till Woman made his happyness compleat.*

And one of her great disappointments seems to have been the failure of her daughter Richa to complete a marriage alliance with David Gomez, and thereby with the illustrious Gomez family, even though David, Daniel’s brother, was almost forty years Richa’s senior. She adopts a sour-grapes attitude, speaking of David as “such a stupid wretch,” and adds to Heartsey

that even if David had proposed, she and Richa would not have accepted him anyway, probably, not even “if his fortune were much more and I a beggar.” Better no marriage at all than marriage to *that* scoundrel, she seems to say, and Richa did indeed remain unmarried all her life, a heavy burden to her mother. Heartsey himself married his first cousin, Phila Franks, in a most satisfactory intramural manner.

Another marital calamity involved the marriage of Abigail’s eldest daughter, also named Phila, to General Oliver De Lancey—who not only eloped with Phila but had her baptized. “Good God what a shock it was,” she wrote Heartsey, “when they acquainted me she had left the house and had bin married six months, I can hardly hold my pen whilst I am writting. . . .” She wrote that “Oliver has sent many times to beg leave to see me, but I never would. . . . Now he sent word that he will come here. . . . I dread seeing him and how to avoid I know no way.” It would be difficult, since the Frankses and the De Lanceys lived next door to each other. Abigail announced that she had instructed her errant daughter never to darken her door again and said: “I am determined I never will see nor let none of ye family go near her,” but she added in almost the next sentence that “Nature is very strong, and it would give me a great concern if she should live unhappy, though it’s a concern she does not merit.”

Abigail Franks’s distress appears to have been entirely over the fact that Oliver De Lancey was a Christian, and to have had nothing to do with what might seem to have been certain deficiencies in the young man’s character. Present-day members of the De Lancey family take their pre-Revolutionary ancestry very seriously but, from contemporary reports, Oliver De Lancey emerges as a scapegrace, a bounder, a drunk, and—if we are to believe the source—a murderer. It was said, at the time, that he married Phila Franks for her money—a considerable inheritance left to her by her uncle Isaac. Shortly after the marriage, on November 3, 1742, Oliver was indicted for assaulting one of his wife’s relatives, Judah Mears, who was the brother of Abigail Franks’s stepmother. He and his friends were accused of attacking “a poor Dutch Jew and his wife,” of breaking their windows, and “swearing that they would lie with the woman.” Using foul language, they warned the couple not to bring charges since De Lancey and his friends were members of prominent New York families. Later the same year, according to a report from Governor George Clinton, Oliver stabbed and killed a Dr. Colchoun in

a drunken brawl. This, however, may be an exaggeration or even an untruth. The De Lanceys and the Clintons were bitterest enemies, the Montagues and Capulets of early New York. It is known that Oliver De Lancey was something of a dandy and spent much of his time, and money, at the barber and at the wigmaker's.

After a while, Oliver seems to have settled down. He brought his wife to the De Lancey "country seat," which was located on what is now West Twelfth Street, west of Hudson Street, in Greenwich Village.* Oliver and Phila had seven children, all of whom made socially important marriages, three of them to titled Englishmen. Susannah married Sir William Draper, Phila married the Honorable Stephen Payne-Gallwey, and Charlotte married Sir David Dundas. Stephen De Lancey married Cornelia Barclay, of another old New York family, and *their* son became Sir William Howe De Lancey. In the next De Lancey generation there appeared, in addition to a flock of Episcopal clergymen, Count Alexander Balmain.†

Meanwhile, intermarriage—the thing which, despite her certain sophistication and attitude of tolerance, Abigail Levy Franks dreaded the most—occurred to the good Jewish mother a second time, when her son David, barely six months after his sister's marriage to De Lancey, married Margaret Evans of Philadelphia. His mother died convinced that she had been a failure as a parent.

It was the Franks-Evans union that produced the beautiful Franks sisters, Rebecca and Abigail, named after her grandmother. We see them in their portraits—Rebecca's by Thomas Sully, who later became Philadelphia's most popular society portraitist—pale, dark-haired, with high cheekbones, long thin noses, and arresting eyes, white and swanlike necks, white bosoms swelling over low-cut dresses. They were unquestionably belles. Rebecca, the younger and probably the more beautiful of the two, was one of the stars, along with Peggy Shippen (who married Benedict Arnold), of one of the most extraordinary affairs in the annals of American entertaining, Philadelphia's "notorious Meschianza."

The Meschianza was an altogether curious event. Just why, in the middle of a great war, British-occupied Philadelphia should have decided to treat itself to a lavish party has never been entirely clear. Perhaps everyone was tired of battles and torn loyalties, and a fancy-dress ball seemed the answer. In any case, appropriate or not, a group of British officers decided in the

spring of 1779 to put on the most extravagant social entertainment the new world had ever seen. The party was to honor the British General Sir William Howe, who was returning home to England.

Within the family, to say nothing of within the Jewish community, the situation must have seemed grotesque. Cousins David and Esther Hays in Westchester were risking their lives and losing their home in order to smuggle provisions through to Revolutionary soldiers. Here, right in Philadelphia, Haym Salomon, whose wife was the Franks sisters' first cousin, was working to fill the Revolution's coffers—and all the while the two giddy girls were planning a party to toast an enemy general. Feelings must have run strong, to say the least.

The men in charge of arrangements for the party were Major John André and Captain Oliver De Lancey, Jr. Both were close friends of the Franks girls. De Lancey, of course, was another first cousin, and Major André had been a suitor, of sorts, of Rebecca's. After being captured at Saint John's in 1775, André had been paroled in Philadelphia. He had been a frequent guest at the Franks mansion, where he spent a long summer of infatuation with Rebecca, then a girl in her middle teens. Dreamily, he passed the warm afternoons reading love poetry to her, and painting a delicate miniature of her face. Rebecca, like her De Lancey cousins, had already become decidedly Tory in her politics. Perhaps her affinity for kings had something to do with her ancestor whom George I had made "the Jew Broker of London." Certainly Major André's attentions can only have bolstered her sentiments.

For weeks before the Meschianza was to take place, Philadelphia was caught up in a flurry of preparations. One London firm reported that it had sold more than £12,000 worth of costly silks and laces for the Philadelphia ladies' dresses. For the British officers, Savile Row shipped red-coated dress uniforms, powdered wigs, cutlasses in bejeweled scabbards.

The party was held at Walnut Grove, the country home of Joseph Wharton, a sedate Quaker, but the party was un-Quakerish in every detail. It turned out that what Major André and Captain De Lancey had in mind was a sort of medieval tournament-festival, along the lines of the one held at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. The Philadelphia replica may well have outdone the original. There were jousts, duels, contests, and feats of strength among the young officers. There was a water festival, a regatta of brightly

decorated sailboats on the river. There were parades and processions under triumphal arches. Blackamoor slaves in Oriental garb served nearly a thousand guests with fifteen varieties of champagnes and other wines, and buffet tables set up throughout the house and gardens offered an “indescribable assortment” of exotic foods, according to one report of the affair. No expense was spared, obviously, for what had been billed as “a medley of extravagance”—which it most certainly was.

The height of the gala was the moment when fourteen “knights”—young British officers—in fancy costumes were divided into two teams of seven men each for a tourney. One team was called “the Knights of the Blended Rose,” the other “the Knights of the Burning Mountain.” After the tilting and jousting—which was all in a light-hearted spirit, and in which no one was even slightly bruised—each side of the tournament selected its “Queen of Beauty.” The Knights of the Blended Rose chose a Miss Auchmuty. The Knights of the Burning Mountain chose Rebecca Franks. She was gowned for the occasion in what was described as “a white silk gown, trimmed with black and white sashes, edged with black. It was a polonaise dress which formed a flowing robe and was open in front to the waist. The sash, six inches wide, was filled with spangles, as was the veil, which was edged with silver lace. The headdress was towering, in the fashion of the time, and was filled with a profusion of pearls and jewels.” She was nineteen years old.

After the tournament, there was a climactic grand ball with fireworks and a “royal repast.” The late spring weather—the date was May 18—was perfect for a party. It had started at four in the afternoon, and lasted all night long. It was midmorning the next day before the last of the revelers turned wearily homeward.

Not many miles away, in Valley Forge, a particularly harried and hard-pressed division of Continental troops was encamped where it had spent a parlous winter with heavy loss of life from disease and starvation.

A month later, the British left Philadelphia, and marched across New Jersey, to be met and defeated at Monmouth. But the memory of the lavish Meschianza rankled for a long time in the minds of the Continental generals, including General Anthony Wayne, who wrote sarcastically:

Tell those Philadelphia ladies who attended Howe's assemblies and *levees*, that the heavenly, sweet, pretty red-coats, the accomplished gentlemen of the guards and grenadiers, have been humbled on the plains of Monmouth. The Knights of the Blended Roses and the Burning Mount have resigned their laurels to rebel officers, who will lay them at the feet of *those* virtuous daughters of America who cheerfully gave up ease and affluence in a city for liberty and peace of mind in a cottage.

Rebecca Franks had admirers on both sides of the Revolution, though she did seem to favor those with pro-British leanings or those who, intentionally or not, did things that helped the British cause. One rebel officer who fancied her was General Charles Lee. His conduct at Monmouth had been somewhat less than glorious. He took his orders from General Washington oddly lightly, and failed to do as he was told, which was to lead an attack on the British from the rear. Was this because Lee had originally been on the British side, and his loyalties still lay in that direction? Was he actually in collaboration with the enemy? There was that possibility. In any case, his behavior caused Washington to suspend him for twelve months. During this time, he engaged in a spirited correspondence with Becky Franks. Occasionally, however, General Lee overstepped himself in his letters, and he had a tendency to use double entendres in such a way that it was often possible to infer a vulgar, if not downright off color, meaning from his words.

Once, for instance, Lee wrote Rebecca a long letter about his trousers. In it, he said that she might have accused him of theft, of getting drunk, of treasonable correspondence with the enemy—had he actually done things of this sort?—or of “never parting with his shirt until his shirt parted with him,” but that it had been unpardonably slanderous of Rebecca to say that he had worn green riding breeches *patched* with leather instead of green riding breeches *reinforced* with leather.” You have injured me in the tenderest part,” he wrote to her, “and I demand satisfaction.” He went on to say: “You cannot be ignorant of the laws of duelling.... I insist on the privilege of the injured party, which is to name his hour and weapons.... I intend it to be a very serious affair.”

This sort of coarse talk—“tenderest part” indeed!—was too much for a properly bred Philadelphia lady like Rebecca Franks. She wrote him tersely to say that she considered his innuendos excessively vulgar, and that she wished to have no further correspondence with General Lee. He, however, quickly apologized and Rebecca eventually took him back into her circle.

Meanwhile, Rebecca’s Tory and Tory-oriented friends were not doing her father any good at all, nor does Rebecca’s behavior give any evidence that she was aware in the slightest of the trouble she was causing him. The British had left Philadelphia. The extravagant display of the Meschianza had left a poor impression. Public opinion associated David Franks with his party-loving daughter, and his business began to suffer. As one of Philadelphia’s most important merchants, David Franks had been a logical choice for commissary to the British prisoners quartered in the city. Now the fact that he had fed and supplied the British—even though they were prisoners of the United States—began to be held against him. In September of 1778, for lack of cash, he was unable to deliver the prisoners their monthly rations and, this excuse being all they needed, the federal authorities promptly arrested David Franks and threw him into prison. The charge was treason against the United States of America.

A mysterious letter, which, if it ever existed, never appeared during the trial, and has never been seen since, was the chief piece of evidence against him. Allegedly written to his brother Moses in England, the letter was said to have contained “intentions inimical to the safety and liberty of the United States.” David Franks may well have been in an inimical frame of mind about the United States and about England as well. The arrangement for him to be paid for feeding and quartering British prisoners had been a quaint one. He had been given the job by the Continental Congress. But he was to have been paid, his orders stipulated, by the British. The British, however, who had perhaps not been consulted in the matter, showed a certain reluctance when it came down to actually reimbursing Mr. Franks for his expenditures and, by December, 1778, Franks was in the dismaying position of owing his creditors for over 500,000 meals supplied to British prisoners in American hands. He had written to the British about this pressing matter. In a series of anxious letters to the Lords of the Treasury, he had outlined his plight; the Lords simply referred him back to Sir Henry Clinton in America, who did nothing.

With her father languishing in prison, Rebecca Franks went right on going to parties. At one ball, a high-ranking American officer made an entrance wearing a bright scarlet coat, and Rebecca Franks was overheard to comment sarcastically, “I see certain animals will put on the lion’s skin.” The story was printed in the paper, noting that Rebecca was “a lady well known in the Tory world.” Though she might have done well to ignore the report, she instead decided to issue a snappy rejoinder, and in a succeeding issue of the newspaper she commented:

There are many people so unhappy in their dispositions that, like the dog in the manger, they can neither enjoy the innocent pleasures of life themselves nor let others, without grumbling or growling, participate in them. Hence it is we frequently observe hints and anecdotes in your paper respecting the commanding officer, headquarters, and Tory ladies. This mode of attacking characters is really admirable, and equally as polite as conveying slander and defamation by significant nods, winks, and shrugs. Poor beings indeed, who plainly indicate to what species of animal they belong, by the baseness of their conduct.

To have defended her “innocent pleasures” at this particular moment, and in the public press, seems callous indeed. Soon after, however, her father’s case was thrown out of court for lack of evidence, and he was released.

David Franks continued to try to collect his money from the British, and begged to be allowed to go personally to British-held New York to see what he could do. His daughter, he wrote, would like to accompany him and “would be very happy in taking a view of the Mall, or having a ramble under the holy old trees in the Broad-way.” In October, 1780, he was arrested again for corresponding with the enemy in New York—which he had most certainly been doing in an attempt to resolve his financial problems—and this time his punishment was exile to New York, which was exactly what he wanted. He and Rebecca left Philadelphia late that year in high spirits.

Rebecca not only had her ramble on Broadway. She also had more parties with British officers. A captain’s barge, she wrote, was ready down at the wharf to carry guests to General Robertson’s summer home, up the river, for a gala weekend. Her letters were filled with chatter about her beaux.

There was Captain Montague, for instance—“Such eyes!”—and she was always most impressed with a suitor who had a title. At one point she was being wooed by no less than three Honorables, one with an income of “£26,000 a year!” Her view of New York was somewhat condescending. She was irked to find that in New York it was impossible for her to step out unchaperoned by an older woman, that this was considered unsafe. “We Philadelphians,” she wrote, “knowing no harm, fear’d none.” The quality of New York entertaining, she felt, was beneath Philadelphia standards, and she found New York ladies short on conversation and addicted to card playing. In a long letter to her sister Abigail, Rebecca wrote:

Few N. York ladies know how to entertain company in their own houses unless they introduce the card tables.... I don’t know a woman or girl that can chat above half an hour, and that’s on the form of a cap, the color of a ribbon, or the set of a hoop stay or *jupon* [petticoat]. I will do our ladies, that is Philadelphians, the justice to say they have more cleverness in the turn of an eye than the New York girls have in their whole composition. With what ease I have seen a Chew, a Penn, Oswald, Allen, and a thousand others entertain a large circle of both sexes, and the conversation without the aid of cards not flag or seem the least strained or stupid.

Here, or more properly speaking in N.Y., you enter the room with a formal set curtsy and after the how do’s, ’tis a fine or a bad day, and those trifling nothings are finished, then all’s a dead calm till the cards are introduced when you see pleasure dancing in the eye of all the matrons, and they seem to gain new life.

Rebecca also had salty comments to make on the courting habits of young New York ladies and gentlemen:

The misses, if they have a favorite swain, frequently decline playing [cards] for the pleasure of making love, for to all appearances ’tis the ladies and not the gentlemen that show a preference nowadays. ’Tis here, I fancy, always leap year. For my part, that am used to quite another mode of behavior, cannot help showing my surprise, perhaps they call it ignorance, when I see a lady single out her *pet* to lean almost in his arms at an assembly or play house (which I give my honor I have too often seen both in married and

single), and to hear a lady confess a partiality for a man who perhaps she has not seen three times. These women say, “Well, I declare, such a gentleman is a delightful creature, and I could love him for my husband,” or “I could marry such and such a person.” And scandal says with respect to most who have been married, the advances have first come from the ladies’ side. Or she has got a male friend to introduce him and puff her off. ’Tis really the case, and with me they lose half their charms; and I fancy there would be more marriage was another mode adopted. But they’ve made the men so saucy that I sincerely believe the lowest ensign thinks ’tis but ask and have; a red coat and smart epaulet is sufficient to secure a female heart.

Her appraisals of female contemporaries were frank and gossipy. Of a Miss Cornelia Van Horn, Rebecca wrote:

She is in disposition as fine a girl as ever you saw, a great deal of good humor and good sense. Her person is too large for a beauty, in my opinion (and yet I am not partial to a *little* woman). Her complexion, eyes, and teeth are very good, and a great quantity of light brown hair (*Entre nous*, the girls of New York excell us Philadelphians in that particular and in their form), and a sweet countenance and agreeable smile. Her feet, as you desire, I’ll say nothing about; they are Van Horns’ and what you’d call Willings.* But her sister Kitty is the belle of the family, I think, though some give preference to Betsy.... Kitty’s form is much in the style of our admired Mrs. Galloway, but rather taller and larger, her complexion very fine, and the finest hair I ever saw. Her teeth are beginning to decay, which is the case of most New York girls after eighteen—and a great deal of elegance of manners.

But it was the men and the parties that received most of Becky Franks’s attention. “Yesterday,” she wrote, “the grenadiers had a race at the Flatlands (Long Island), and in the afternoon this house swarmed with beaux and some very smart ones. How the girls would have envied me could they have peeped and seen how I was surrounded.” Six months after the above was written, Rebecca married one of her handsome, titled swains, Sir Henry Johnson. The American Revolution ruined her father. He never succeeded in obtaining a fraction of the money the British owed him and, in later

years, David Franks appears to have survived by obtaining a series of small loans from Michael Gratz, one of his fellow Sephardim in Philadelphia.

But his daughter had made a brilliant marriage and, in later years, she also appears to have changed her politics. In 1816, after England had lost both the Revolution and the War of 1812, Rebecca, now Lady Johnson, was visited in London by General Winfield Scott, the dashing hero—a general at the age of twenty-eight—of the latter war. She had lost her looks, but not her enthusiasm, and she said to Scott, “I have gloried in my rebel countrymen! Would to God I, too, had been a patriot!”

Rebecca and her sister Abigail were responsible for elevating the Franks family name into the highest society on both sides of the Atlantic. Rebecca’s descendants, the Johnsons of Bath, stud Burke’s Peerage as well as the officer corps of the British Army. Of her nine grandsons, three were generals, one was a major general, one a lieutenant general, two were colonels, one a captain. The ninth became an Episcopal clergyman.

Abigail, meanwhile, married Andrew Hamilton, the jurist of whom it is said that “All Philadelphia lawyers look on him as their exemplar.” In addition to the American Hamiltons, not to be sneezed at, her family tree has become decorated with such imposing names as Sir Thomas Whichcote; the Honorable Henry Campbell Bruce, Lord Aberdare; Orlando Bridgeman, fifth earl of Bradford; Sir Robert Edward Henry Abdy, fifth baronet; Algernon Henry Strutt, third Baron Belper; Albert Edward Harry Mayer Archibald Primrose, sixth earl of Rosebery; and Edward Kenelm Digby, eleventh Baron Digby. The list of descendants of Abigail Franks is topped off by the former Mrs. Randolph Churchill, and by the actual entrance of the blood royal, which occurred when Lady Lavinia Mary, the earl of Rosebery’s daughter, married Bernard Marmaduke Fitzalan Howard, sixteenth duke of Norfolk.

It seems a respectable enough collection of descendants for an eighteenth-century Philadelphia Jewish mother whose greatest ambition was for her daughter to marry a Gomez.

In retrospect, Becky Franks appears to us as a vain, frivolous, fickle woman, single-mindedly dedicated to her “innocent pleasures” and little else, committed to taking the center of the stage and getting what she wanted. Her contemporary in Philadelphia society, Rebecca Gratz—also renowned for her beauty—was a very different sort of person: serious, a do-

gooder, a premature Victorian, a little stuffy, something of a bluestocking. The Gratzes were “connected” with the Franks family, via the Hayses and the Ettings. One of Rebecca Gratz’s sisters, for example, had married Reuben Etting II (Esther Etting Hays’s first cousin, named after Esther’s brother who had died as a British prisoner), and another sister was Mrs. Samuel Hays. The Gratzes rather disapproved of the high-living Franks family, particularly the girls, and the Gratzes found it rather comforting to remember that David Franks, whose family had carried on in such a purse-proud manner, had had to turn to a Gratz—Rebecca Gratz’s father—for financial help in his latter years.

The Gratzes also disapproved of intermarriage, and they disapproved of what they heard about the Jewish community of New Orleans, of the loose and backsliding ways that seemed to prevail in that southern city. In 1807, Rebecca Gratz wrote her brother Joseph a cautioning letter before he set out for a trip south:

... At New Orleans, there are many who call themselves Jews, or at least whose parentage being known are obliged to acknowledge themselves such, but who neglect those duties which would make that title honorable and then respected—among such as [you] my dear Jo, I hope you will never make one; be assured the worthy and the thinking part of the community will ever estimate a man, by his attention to the serious, domestic duties which speak more truly his character than the external forms in which he presents himself to the world; who would depend on a man’s engagements with his fellow men, if he violates his more important engagements with God?

She may well have had in mind just such men as Judah Touro, about whom it was already being said that he paid little attention to his religion. If Rebecca Franks liked to fill her days with party-going and flirtation, Rebecca Gratz preferred more serious pursuits. She was literary, and enjoyed the company of painters and writers, including William Cullen Bryant, James Fenimore Cooper, Henry Tuckerman, and Washington Irving. She was philanthropic. In her Sully portrait, we see a demurely smiling beauty: olive-skinned, with soft dark brown eyes, black hair under a heart-shaped hat from which falls a bit of white lace draping. Her yellow mantle is lined with white fur. John Sartain, in *The Reminiscences of a Very*

Old Man, described a visit to Rebecca Gratz: “Her eyes struck me as piercingly dark, yet mild of expression, in a face tenderly pale. The portrait Sully painted of her must have been a remarkable likeness, that so many years after I should recognize her instantly by remembrance of her.” Meanwhile, according to her relative Gratz Van Rensselaer: “The Gratz family mansion was known far and wide as the home of a refined and elegant hospitality. Gifted and distinguished guests—illustrious statesmen, and eminent persons from abroad whom choice or vicissitude brought to this country—found there an appreciative welcome.”

A particularly close friend of Rebecca Gratz’s was Matilda Hoffman. It was in the office of Matilda’s father, Judge Ogden Hoffman, that Washington Irving studied law, and presently Miss Hoffman and Washington Irving became engaged. But before the pair could marry, Miss Hoffman became ill with “wasting disease,” a common affliction of the day, and Rebecca went to live at the Hoffmans’ to help nurse her friend. Rebecca was there to close Matilda’s eyes at the end.

This devotion of one young woman to another impressed Irving. When he went to England to try to forget his sweetheart’s death, Rebecca Gratz and her kindness to Matilda became almost an obsession with him. He could talk of little else but the Jewess’ services to her Christian friend. One of the people he told the story to was Sir Walter Scott, and from this the legend has descended that Scott—who never met Rebecca Gratz—used her as his model for the character Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*. It is probably true, but the evidence is not as clear-cut as it might be. It has been said, for example, that when *Ivanhoe* was published, Scott sent Irving a first edition inscribed: “How does my Rebecca compare with yours?” Actually, Scott wrote Irving a letter saying, in somewhat different words: “How do you like your Rebecca? Does the Rebecca I have pictured compare well with the pattern given?”—a small, possibly insignificant, difference.

Rebecca Gratz, meanwhile, was clearly pleased to think that she and Rebecca in *Ivanhoe* were the same person. She read the novel in 1820 and immediately wrote to her sister-in-law: “Have you received *Ivanhoe*? When you read it tell me what you think of my namesake Rebecca.” A few weeks later she wrote again:

I am glad you admire Rebecca, for she is just such a representation of a good girl as I think human nature can reach. *Ivanhoe's* insensibility to her, you must recollect, may be accounted to his previous attachment—his prejudice was a characteristic of the age he lived in—he fought for Rebecca, though he despised her race—the veil that is drawn over his feelings was necessary to the fable, and the beautiful sensibility of hers, so regulated yet so intense, might show the triumph of faith over human affection. I have dwelt on this character as we sometimes do on an exquisite painting until the canvas seems to breathe and we believe it is life.

In later years, when asked—and she frequently was—whether she was Rebecca of Scott's romance, she would merely smile primly and change the subject.

One aspect of Rebecca Gratz's story that must have appealed to Scott's sentimental nature—so much so that he may easily have been tempted to borrow it for his tale—was that Rebecca, in life, like Rebecca in fiction, had had an unhappy love affair with a Christian. He had been young Samuel Ewing, the son of the Presbyterian provost of the University of Pennsylvania. He had escorted Rebecca to the Assembly ball of 1802. But Rebecca's parents, and Rebecca herself, had always opposed intermarriage with non-Jews. Rebecca's and young Ewing's love was star-crossed from the beginning. Faith, as she put it, had to triumph over affection.

Rebecca Gratz was nearly forty when she read *Ivanhoe*. She could look back on events of twenty years before with equanimity. In time, Sam Ewing had made a proper Philadelphia wedding, to one of the Redman girls. But it was not a happy union, and he died young. When he was lying in his coffin there was a sudden hush in the church as the heavily veiled figure of Rebecca Gratz appeared in the doorway. She moved swiftly to the coffin, placed a small object on his breast, and just as swiftly departed. The object was a miniature portrait of herself. With it were three white roses, crossed to form a six-pointed star.

She never married. She devoted her life to good deeds. She founded the Philadelphia Orphan Society, in 1815. She became secretary of the Female Association for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances. She founded the Hebrew Sunday School Society, the first of its kind in America. She helped found the Jewish Foster Home. She began

and ended each day with prayer. When her sister, Rachel Gratz Moses, died in 1823, Rebecca helped raise Rachel's nine small children. Her spirit showed in her face. After painting her, Thomas Sully said that he had "never seen a more striking Hebraic face. The easy pose, suggestive of perfect health, the delicately turned neck and shoulders with the firmly poised head and its profusion of dark curling hair, large, clear black eyes, the contour of the face, the fine white skin, the expressive mouth and the firmly chiselled nose, with its strength of character, left no doubt as to the race from which she had sprung. Possessed of an elegant bearing, a melodiously sympathetic voice, a simple and frank and gracious womanliness, there was about Rebecca Gratz all that a princess of the blood Royal might have coveted." What better description of a heroine of fiction?

The religious school she founded still operates, and Rebecca Gratz foundations continue to dispense funds in Philadelphia. In later Gratz generations, family strictures against marrying Christians relaxed considerably. Collateral Gratz descendants today are named Wallace, Rowland, Taylor, Brewster, Marshall, McClure, and Gillette. Her brother's great-granddaughter is the present Mrs. Godfrey S. Rockefeller of Greenwich, Connecticut.

Helen Gratz Rockefeller is a handsome, cheerful woman in her sixties who recalls, of the Gratz relatives whom she knew: "We were a rather tempestuous, almost violent family. Life was hardly ever placid. My grandfather, Henry Howard Gratz, had a terrible temper and was something of a despot. He used to terrify us. He'd do things like throw his cane at you if he caught you eating an apple. He had three wives. The third one he married when he was seventy, and she was only thirty. She adored him, but when he was cross with her he'd throw all of her flowerpots out the window. But we had a terribly strong sense of family obligation. We stuck together through thick and thin."

Mrs. Rockefeller says: "The Gratz family fortune was pretty well diminished by the time it reached my grandfather's generation. My father, Benjamin Gratz III, left home with two dollars and fifty cents in his pocket when he was in his early twenties. The two dollars was stolen, but with the fifty cents he built up a whole new fortune for himself, and took care of everybody in the family—aunts, uncles, relatives from miles around. We all lived together in Saint Louis. There was a great deal of singing together and

reading aloud.” Though Mrs. Rockefeller is proud of her Jewish heritage, the Gratzes she descends from have been Episcopalians from her grandfather’s generation on, if not from even before. It strikes her as quaintly ironic that her collateral ancestor Rebecca Gratz should have remained unmarried for life because she loved a Christian, whereas Gratzes in subsequent generations have displayed a tendency to marry several times—her grandfather three times, and her father twice. As a child, growing up in Saint Louis, she recalls her parents as stalwart churchgoers, and Bishop Tuttle of Saint Louis was a regular guest at the Gratz Sunday dinner table. Mrs. Rockefeller remembers her mother asking the deaf old bishop, “Do you like bananas, Bishop?” and the bishop cupping his ear to inquire, “What was that?” “*Do you like bananas, Bishop?*” Mrs. Gratz asked in a louder voice. “No,” the bishop replied, “I prefer the old-fashioned nightshirt.”

There is no question that the social distinction, and the charm, of early American Jewish women, as well as the financial assistance and business probity of the men, all helped George Washington—who, after all, was an aristocratic Virginian and something of a snob—to look with favor on Jews as a whole, as a people, as a valuable part of the new nation. Jewish officers, including two cousins of the Franks sisters, served on his staff. Colonel David Salisbury Franks—Haym Salomon’s brother-in-law—was Washington’s emissary to Paris, where he carried dispatches between Washington and Ambassador Benjamin Franklin; he also delivered copies of the 1784 treaty of peace with England to the American embassies in Europe. Colonel Isaac Franks, called “the boy hero of the Revolution” (he was only sixteen when he enlisted), rose in the ranks until he was attached to headquarters as General Washington’s aide-de-camp.

But at the war’s end, the still relative minority of Jews in the country looked at their new government with a certain apprehensiveness. After all, not all had backed the Revolutionary cause. And for three hundred years, under a variety of monarchs and colonial leaders, under many flags, these ancient, proud, and highly bred families from Spain and Portugal had received treatment that had been, at best, uneven and, at its worst, calamitous. Which way would the winds blow now?

When George Washington was inaugurated as first President of the United States of America, the heads of the Jewish communities in Philadelphia, New York, Richmond, Charleston, and Savannah all wrote cautious letters to the new chief executive. They reminded him, as politely as possible, of the kind of country they hoped the United States would be. Moses Seixas, head of the Newport congregation, put it best. Would the world now see, he asked, “a Government which to bigotry gives no sanction, to persecution no assistance, but generously affording to all liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship, deeming everyone of whatever nation, tongue and language, equal parts of the great government machine?”

Seixas’ letter obviously impressed the President, for he actually borrowed some of Seixas’ rhetoric in his reply:

GENTLEMEN:

While I receive with much satisfaction your address replete with expressions of esteem, I rejoice in the opportunity of assuring you that I shall always retain grateful remembrance of the cordial welcome I experienced on my visit to Newport from all classes of citizens.

The reflection on the days of difficulty and danger which are passed is rendered the more sweet from a consciousness that they are succeeded by days of uncommon prosperity and security.

If we have wisdom to make the best use of the advantages with which we are now favored, we cannot fail, under the just administration of a good government to become a great and happy people.

The citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship.

It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it were by the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural right, for, happily, the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection shall demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.

It would be inconsistent with the frankness of my character not to avow that I am pleased with your favorable opinion of my administration and

fervent wishes for my felicity.

May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants, while everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid.

May the Father of all Mercies scatter light, and not darkness upon our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in His own due time and way, everlasting happy.

G. WASHINGTON

In his sometimes jawbreaking prose, he was uttering almost dreamily noble sentiments, painting a picture of America's future that was close to utopian. But the heart of "G. Washington" was in the right place.

* Alexander Hamilton, a frequent traveler, wrote in the summer of 1744: "At twelve o'clock we passed a little town, starboard, called Greenwiteh, consisting of eight or ten neat houses, and two or three miles above that on the same shore, a pretty box of a house with an avenue fronting the river belonging to Oliver De Lancey."

† Kin, though distantly, of the Paris couturier Pierre Balmain.

* The Willings, partners of Robert Morris, apparently had big feet.

LEGENDS AND LEGACIES

Each of the old families has its favorite legend, and Aunt Elvira Nathan Solis knew them all. Some of the most romantic, to be sure, involved members of the Solis family who, through the vellum pages of Dr. Stern's book, can be seen to have evolved into present-day New York and Philadelphia Solises out of a series of dynastic marriages in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Iberia. It all began when a certain Marquesa Lopes (undoubtedly a distant ancestor of Aaron Lopez) married Fernao Jorge Da Solis and, at roughly the same time, Beatrice Pinto married Duarte Da Silva. The Da Silvas' son married the Da Solises' daughter, bringing the two houses together, and from then on—making use of the Spanish practice of appending the mother's name to the surnames of the children—the family fell heir to the double name of Da Silva Solis or, as it was used in certain branches, Da Silva y Solis. This was all in the sixteenth century, and is remarkable in that the practice has been continued to this day. (Emily Nathan's full name, for instance, is Emily Da Silva Solis Nathan.)

Dr. Stern's book reveals such peripheral information about the Solis family as the fact that one Joseph Da Silva Solis, a London gold broker, was so good at his job that he earned the admiring nickname "El Dorado." In one branch of the family, for several generations, the male heirs bore the hereditary title of Marquis de Montfort. Next to another name in the voluminous Solis family tree, Dr. Stern has made the sinister notation: "Murdered at Murney, Friday, October 17, 1817."

The Solises, Aunt Ellie Solis liked to remind the children, were noted for producing strong-minded ladies. A number of Solis women, through

history, have let their husbands retire to intellectual pursuits while the women ran the family business—or the country. A fifteenth-century example of this breed was Isabel de Solis, otherwise romantically known as “Zoraya the Morning Star.” Isabel, or Zoraya, was captured as a slave by Suley Hassan, the Moorish sultan of Granada, who made her his concubine. But so strong was her will, and so powerful was her allure, that she was soon running both the sultan and the sultanate. All American Solises also descend from Dona Isabel de Fonseca, a daughter of the Marquis of Turin and the Count of Villa Real and Monterrey, and Solomon da Silva Solis. In a plan masterminded by Dona Isabel, the pair escaped from Portugal disguised as Christians and were married as Jews in Amsterdam in 1670.

By the time Jacob da Silva Solis arrived in New York from London in 1803, the family fortunes were somewhat diminished. Jacob made an auspicious in-the-group marriage to David and Esther Hays’s daughter Charity, and took her with him to Wilmington, Delaware, where he opened a store. Jacob’s theory was that Wilmingtonians were doing too much of their shopping in nearby Philadelphia, and would save time and money by buying their dry-goods nearer home. Apparently he was wrong, for five years later, when this venture failed, he himself was in Philadelphia, looking for a job. He applied to one of his wife’s relatives, Simon Gratz, for the humble position of shohet, or ritual slaughterer, and was rather summarily turned down by Mr. Gratz. Leaving his wife and children behind, he went south to New Orleans, where an earlier Solis, Joseph, had made a fortune developing Louisiana’s sugar cane industry. But Jacob, alas, had no such luck. One of the stories Aunt Ellie Solis used to tell was that in the spring of 1827 in New Orleans, Jacob da Silva Solis was so poor that, unable to purchase matzos for his Passover festival—and horrified that New Orleans Jews seemed to care so little for Passover that they had none to give him—he sat down and ground the meal and made his own. As other good orthodox Sephardim had before him, Jacob deplored the laxity, when it came to religious matters, of the New Orleans Jews. He determined to establish his own congregation, and at this he was successful. Though Jacob Solis’ personal congregation never achieved any sort of dominance in the community, it did get a New Orleans thoroughfare named Solis Street.

Probably Jacob da Silva Solis’ greatest moment came when it was discovered that the *Converso* line of the House of Solis had become extinct

in Portugal. The Portuguese ambassador, himself of Marrano descent, journeyed to New Orleans to advise Jacob that he could succeed to the Solis titles and properties in Europe, provided, of course, that he would become a Catholic. Jacob da Silva Solis gazed stonily at the ambassador for a moment, and declined the offer. The ambassador could not believe his ears. “You fool!” he is said to have cried. “It is one of the greatest dignities in Europe!” Mr. Solis, secure in his own dignity, replied: “Not for the whole of Europe would I forsake my faith, and neither would my son Solomon.” It was one of Aunt Ellie’s favorite tales. How Jacob Solis’ poor wife back in Philadelphia—she had borne him seven children—felt about this gesture is not recorded.

Two of Jacob Solis’ children managed to redeem the family name, and handsomely at that. His son David married Elvira Nathan (Aunt Ellie’s mother), and brought the American Solises into the Seixas-Nathan-Mendes family complex. The Nathans, of course, were New York-based. Jacob Solis’ daughter Judith married Myer David Cohen, of Philadelphia, and produced nine children. At Judith’s insistence—she was another strong-willed lady—her children bore the hyphenated name Solis-Cohen, their mother’s name placed *first*. Solis, she explained, was after all a more important name than Cohen; Mr. Cohen, furthermore, had been born in southern Germany. Solis-Cohens are still prominent in Philadelphia, and continue to be loyal to da Silva when it comes to middle names.

Both the da Silvas and the Solises are connected with the Peixottos—another old Sephardic family—and the Peixottos are similarly name-proud. The Peixotto family crest depicts two ovals, one containing two fish, the other a hand pouring water from a pitcher into a bowl. The ovals are surmounted by a very regal-looking crown, and the entirety is circled by an elaborate wreath. The word *peixotto*, in Portuguese, means “little fish,” explaining the first oval. The hand pouring water is the symbol of the Levites, or priests of Israel. Though present-day Peixottos are not sure just how, they are convinced that the crown and the wreath cannot stand for anything less than royalty.

In 1634, one Don Diego Peixotto and his two brothers—Antonio Mendes Peixotto and Joshua Peixotto—were imprisoned for high treason. They were accused, no less, of “governing an armada which caused the downfall of Pernambuco,” and the motive ascribed to them was vengeance against

the Inquisition. The Peixottos also were fond of hyphenated names. When, in the eighteenth century, a Miss Cohen Peixotto married Mr. Levy Maduro, their descendants used the name Maduro-Peixotto, the wife's name last.

The Peixottos were noted for their hot tempers and, as happens in any tight-knit family, feuds developed. There are branches of the Peixotto family that have not spoken to each other for generations. At a Peixotto family funeral in the 1830's, hardly any of the mourners were on speaking terms with the others. Peixottos have been quick to cut their heirs out of their wills for the slightest breach of loyalty, but then so have the Seixases. When Abraham Mendes Seixas, patriarch of the American branch of the family (who, to confuse things somewhat, also used the name Miguel Pacheco da Silva), died in London in 1738, he left a will—written in Portuguese—in which he left the bulk of his considerable estate to his two daughters. To his only son—who later emigrated to New York—he left “only fifty pounds for reasons known to myself.” It was possibly because the young man had reached the advanced age of thirty without marrying to produce an heir. (He eventually succeeded in performing both duties.)

(Equally testy in his will was Judah Hays. When he died in New York in 1764, he cut off his daughter Rachel with only five shillings for marrying against his wishes, and another daughter, Caty, received her inheritance in an elaborate trust because, as her father put it in his will, he had little opinion of the business ability of her husband, Abraham Sarzedas, with whom she had gone off to live in Georgia. Later, Sarzedas distinguished himself as a Revolutionary officer of the Light Dragoons—too late, however, to redeem himself with his father-in-law.)

Peixottos were also determinedly civic-minded. When the Shearith Israel congregation lost its pastor of fifty years, Gershom Mendes Seixas, when he died in 1816, there was difficulty finding a rabbi who could fill his place. Moses Levy Maduro-Peixotto, a prosperous merchant, was a Judaic scholar, though not a rabbi, and he offered to fill the vacancy until a permanent replacement could be found. So well did he fill the post that the congregation voted to keep him. He gave up his mercantile career to devote himself to the parish, and continued to do so until his death in 1828. Because he was rich, furthermore, he turned over his salary throughout these years to Rabbi Seixas' widow.

All these strains—Seixas, Peixotto, Maduro, Hays, Solis, and a good many others—and, no doubt, their accompanying characteristics, come together in the Hendricks family. Perhaps the quickest way to see how this happened is to realize that when Uriah Hendricks arrived on American shores in 1755, he married, first, Daniel Gomez' niece Eve Esther Gomez. Widowed a few years later, he married, second, Aaron Lopez' daughter Rebecca. From then on, the pattern of intramural marriages became so bewilderingly complex that even Dr. Stern slips and stumbles now and then as, under the Hendricks family name, all the old names gather, weaving the whole into an ever tightening bundle.

The Hendrickses had a knack for making money. Uriah Hendricks opened a small store in Cliff Street, in lower Manhattan, selling dry goods—underwear, suspenders, shoelaces, cheap watches, handkerchiefs—anything that could be stored in a small place, sold quickly and for a little profit. Soon he was prospering, and able to move to a larger store in Mill Street, now South William Street. He embarked upon the creation of a large family. Eventually there were ten children. Uriah may also have been something of a philanderer, if we are to take the implications contained in an early letter to Uriah from his wife's brother Isaac Gomez, who, in a scolding tone, took Uriah to task over an "infatuation." Gomez wrote that "To support my character as a gentleman and for no other reason, I would wish you to enquire of the company [you are keeping] who must displease her ladyship [Mrs. Hendricks] as much as I and my family." The warning may have worked, for subsequent letters contain no mention of the matter.

Uriah Hendricks supplied the Colonies in the French and Indian wars and laid the groundwork for a fortune. But it was his second-eldest son, Harmon Hendricks, born in New York in 1771, who brought the Hendricks business to success on a national and even international scale. Harmon Hendricks took his father's business and began expanding it. From undershirts and watches, he moved into spangles, looking glasses, umbrellas, and tablecloths. He sold snuffboxes, gilt frames, ivory combs, beads, and brass kettles. He traded rice for pianos, and pianos for shipments of German glass, gold leaf, knives, forks, and brooches. He dealt in wire, tinsplate, Spanish dollars, and lottery tickets—even tickets described in his books as "enemy lottery." His business correspondence is filled with notations such as: "Bicycle horns are no use in New England," and "Epaulets too high in

price,” and “Large kettles not salable in Hartford.” He established for himself a variety of buying and selling agents in London and Bristol, England; in Kingston, Jamaica; in Boston, Hartford, Newport, Philadelphia, and Charleston. He was, in short, a trader. He could trade with equal ease in any commodity.

There were, of course, deals that were less profitable than others, as is apparent in a revealing series of letters between Harmon Hendricks and one Abraham Cohen of Philadelphia. Late in 1797, Harmon had sent Mr. Cohen a sizable shipment of cigars, or “segars,” as they are referred to in the correspondence that ensued. In March, 1798, Mr. Hendricks wrote Mr. Cohen a carefully worded letter in which he expressed “surprise” at Mr. Cohen’s “silence of four months without remittance” in payment for the shipment. Mr. Cohen’s reply to this was disturbingly vague. He explained that he had been “every day expecting of making a remittance and thought I would wait [before writing] until then.” No remittance was made, and six months of further silence went by. In November, Mr. Cohen wrote to say that he would pay “when Isaac Pesoa goes to N.Y.,” the plan apparently being to have Mr. Pesoa deliver the money. Cohen added an encouraging note that he had opened a retail-wholesale grocery store at 44 South Fourth Street in Philadelphia, “An excellent place for smoaking segars—no less than 4 tavern [*sic*] in the neighborhood!” Two weeks later, however, Mr. Cohen wrote to Mr. Hendricks to express his own indignant “surprise” that Hendricks should himself have sent Isaac Pesoa to collect, or try to collect, the owed money. Cohen added that he “cannot sell the segars”—despite the four taverns.

On December 10, Cohen wrote that he could still not pay for the cigars due to “unforseen circumstances.” A month later, on January 16, 1799, obviously feeling under pressure, Mr. Cohen wrote to Hendricks that a certain John Barnes had collected \$52.40 in partial payment for the shipment, but a month later this turned out to be untrue. Mr. Barnes swore that he had received no money at all from Mr. Cohen. By summer of 1799, Harmon Hendricks was clearly losing patience with Cohen and wrote to Isaac Pesoa, saying: “this segar article is so very uncertain on acct. of the many various deceptions,” and added that he would certainly like to collect from Cohen but “will not protest it.” In August, Pesoa replied that there was nothing to be gained, in his opinion, from Hendricks’ suing Cohen for the

money. “I have no doubt,” said Pesoa, “that if any of his creditors sue him he will be obliged [*sic*] to take the benefit of the Act”—that is, for indigents and insolvents. And there the matter ended. Harmon Hendricks was never paid for his “segars.”

He was, in the meantime, dealing in a more lucrative commodity. Though he continued to trade in combs, snuffboxes, spangles, mirrors, and pianos, he had been steadily focusing more and more of his time and attention on the copper trade. Copper has been called “the poor man’s metal,” and “the ugly duckling of metals,” despised for its very abundance. There are copper deposits in virtually every part of the globe, from Cape Horn to Siberia. Copper is easily mined, cheaply milled. Historically, little value has been attached to it, and it has been used for the cheapest coins, the meanest utensils, kitchen pots and pans. But in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the booming African slave trade created, indirectly, a new and important need for copper. Copper was needed in New England and in the West Indies for the bottoms of the huge stills that turned out the hundreds of thousands of gallons of rum that occupied such an important point of the three-cornered pattern of the slave trade. In 1812, Harmon Hendricks moved westward into the town of Belleville, New Jersey, and built what was the first copper-rolling mill in the United States. Within a few years, most of the rum produced in the Americas was coming from stills made of Hendricks copper.

Both Harmon and his father had been Tories during the Revolution, but that did not prevent Harmon from doing business with Paul Revere a few years later. In fact, as early as 1805, the two copper titans had reached an informal agreement by which they intended to corner the American copper market and set its price. Let us, Revere proposed, buy “the whole block of copper in our single name”—or in the names of friends and relatives, depending on how sales went—and then, as he put it, “equalize between us the quality and the price.” Both men were firmly against the imposition of an import duty on foreign copper, particularly from Britain, brought into the United States. As Hendricks expressed it in a letter to Revere: “There will be more honor in beating John Bull out of our market by low price and superior quality than by duties which may tempt new manufacturers to operate more to our prejudice.” The two men wanted, in other words, no further domestic competition, and for several years they were able to have

the American copper pie fairly evenly divided between them. They were also opposed to the administration of James Madison, whose purchasing agents they frequently accused of supplying fishy figures.

“We have observed Mr. Smith’s report,” Revere wrote Hendricks early in 1806. “It is all of a piece with the present administration of government. His report has \$56,840 worth of sheets, bolts, spikes.... Now we know there is in store in Charlestown more than \$120,000 worth....” Less than half, in other words, of what had been shipped was being acknowledged as received. But apparently the men got their money, for the Revere-Hendricks accounts show more than half a million dollars received in payment for government orders that year.

In 1803, a young man named Robert Fulton succeeded in demonstrating that a water-going vessel could be propelled by steam. Fulton’s steam boilers were made of copper, and Fulton became another important customer of Harmon Hendricks. Hendricks boilers went into the *Fulton*—the first steam warship—the *Paragon*, the *Firefly*, the *Nassau*, and the *Clermont*, which for years plied up and down the Hudson River between New York and Albany. Soon, selling copper for Fulton’s boilers—Fulton had a monopoly on the manufacture of steamboats for thirty years—became more lucrative than selling copper for stills. Harmon Hendricks’ partner (and brother-in-law), Solomon Isaacs, became so identified with boilers that he was nicknamed “Steamboat” Isaacs. In 1819, when Fulton was fitting out the S.S. *Savannah* to be the first oceangoing steamship, the craft was labeled a “steam coffin” by various nay-sayers in high places, who insisted it would never work. When the ship completed its triumphant voyage across the Atlantic in record time, Harmon Hendricks modestly announced that his copper was in the *Savannah*’s boilers.

The *Savannah*, however, was not one of his firm’s more profitable undertakings. Harmon Hendricks had cousins in the city of Savannah—the Henrys and the Minises—who were important stockholders in the Savannah Steamship Company, and Hendricks had sold them his copper at family prices. One boiler, twenty by eight and a half feet in size, had cost \$30,000 for the *Fulton* five years earlier. For the *Savannah*’s two larger boilers, each twenty-six by six feet, he charged only \$1,237.72. Also, for some reason, Hendricks’ relatives never paid him in full. He received only \$1,115.05—\$122.67 short.

Success and riches were, of course, a mixed blessing when, as word of Harmon Hendricks' wealth reached them, distant kin from all over the globe began writing him for what they felt was their proper share of the bounty.

It is clear that a good part of each day was taken up dealing with these demands. There were, for instance, some of his stepmother's Lopez cousins in Newport who continually wrote to declare themselves "destitute," asking for money in sums small and large. To a typically tearful Lopez note, asking for thirty dollars, Harmon Hendricks would append the curt notation of his own: "Sent her \$20." A few months later, another relative of his stepmother's Samuel Lopez, wanted two hundred dollars, promising "with the honor of a Mason" to repay it. To a nephew of Gilbert Stuart, Harmon Hendricks loaned \$12,000, and when Stuart heard of this he cautioned Hendricks: "If you have patience, he will repay you, but if, like a hard master, you attempt to cast him into prison you may lose all." At the same time, money was coming into the Hendricks firm at a gratifying rate, from sales of copper as well as from such items as turpentine, pigs, pumpkins, gin, and garden seed. In 1807, Hendricks' brother-in-law Jacob de Leon noted to Hendricks that he had sold "upward of \$70,000 in black birds"—a euphemism for Negro slaves—and would be paid in November. His good luck continued. On July 22, 1814, Harmon bet one Jack Cohen "a beaver hat" that there would be peace within four months—and won the bet, for hostilities of the War of 1812 ended before November.

But relatives continued to pester him. From England a widowed aunt, Rachel Waag, wrote to him to explain that her late husband's estate had not yet been settled; until then she needed money. Hendricks appointed one of his London representatives to supply her with cash. A cousin, Benjamin Da Costa, whose wife had died, sent his young son, Moses, to live with the Hendrickses, who already had twelve children of their own, and Da Costa kept Harmon Hendricks busy with instructions as to what sort of an education the boy should receive. Harmon had him studying Spanish and French, but Da Costa preferred that the boy study English, "the Mother Tongue," and even suggested that Hebrew be dropped from his curriculum, "As I daresay he knows his prayers in that language by now, which is as much as I wish."

There was also the painful problem of Harmon Hendricks' sister Sally, one of those whom Malcolm Stern's book adjudges to have been "insane." Insane or not, she was certainly a trial to her family, never content to be where she was, always wanting to be somewhere else. She spent her life being shuttled back and forth among relatives, none of whom was ever particularly overjoyed to see her. She was referred to as "our unfortunate sister," and described as being "of a very unsettled disposition." Her condition must have been particularly unsettling to Harmon Hendricks, three of whose children had already shown signs of being, as it was said, "peculiar." One son, for example, made a fetish of cleanliness, and would eat nothing that had not been scrubbed with hot water and strong soap. He washed his hands as often as a hundred times a day. A daughter was "melancholy," and lapsed into alarming depressions that lasted for days. Sally Hendricks' obsession was with her money, which, she insisted, many enemies were determined to take away from her and put to dark uses. Her father had left her a comfortable inheritance but, since she considered the money to be in such a hazardous position, she refused to spend any of it and filled her time moving her accounts—no one but she knew how many she had—from bank to bank. For a while, Sally lived with her brother-in-law Jacob de Leon in Charleston, but she was unhappy there and insisted on returning to New York "to see after her money." She set sail from Charleston on a ship called the *Rose-in-Bloom*, and it was an agonizing voyage. She was mistreated at sea, she claimed, by the ship's captain, was given short rations and bad food, and, instead of a private stateroom, was placed in a cabin with another woman and a child. The woman, Sally complained, was "of a certain character." In New York, Sally—and her complaints—went to live with Harmon Hendricks and his brood, a large and not entirely happy family.

There were difficulties of other sorts. By 1793, yellow fever had become an annual blight in both Philadelphia and New York, and, when it made its summer appearance, Harmon Hendricks was forced to close his copper mill and all business came to a standstill. "It carries off 60 a day," he wrote in 1805. New Yorkers were baffled by the disease, and a variety of theories as to its cause were advanced. Harmon Hendricks wrote that he believed "trade with the French Islands of the West Indies" was indirectly responsible, and that beef stored in warehouses for this trade had putrefied

and somehow made the air contagious and unfit to breathe. He pointed out that people in the neighborhoods of the warehouses—which, of course, were not located in the tidiest parts of town—fell victims first. He was able to make a convincing argument of this, and, that same year, during the height of the plague, five thousand barrels of beef were dumped into the Hudson River. Those New Yorkers who could afford to fled north to the “Village of Greenwich” each year when the fever began to rage and, of course, those who were already infected by the mosquito that caused it took the disease with them.

But, for all his business and family ups and downs, Harmon Hendricks was able to establish himself as one of the East’s most important merchant-manufacturers. By 1812, he was rich enough to make his celebrated offer of a loan to the government to finance its war with the British. By 1825, he had his own bank and was also a director of the Hartford Bank (which would tactfully ask “for a reply by Sunday mail if not trespassing on your Sabbath”). He also acquired considerable real estate. In addition to the New Jersey plant, he owned from Twentieth to Twenty-second streets between Sixth and Seventh avenues in Manhattan, and also thirty acres along Broadway. He continued to sell copper for the bottoms of stills and the boilers of ships, and to the United States mint for coins, while making loans in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. He also established the Hendricks family socially, and was a member of the elite Union Club. Harmon Hendricks died in 1838. Several years later, Joseph Scoville, in *The Old Merchants of New York City*, wrote:

Mr. Hendricks was a born New Yorker, of the Jewish persuasion—honest, upright, prudent, and a very cautious man.... He died immensely rich, leaving over three millions of dollars.... His heirs are worth at least seven millions.... With all the revulsions in trade, the credit of the house for half a century has never been questioned, either in this country or in Europe, and today in Wall Street their obligations would sell quite as readily as government securities bearing the same rates of interest. No man stood higher in this community while he lived, and no man left a memory more revered than Harmon Hendricks.

He also left three strong sons—Uriah II, Henry, and Montague—all eager to carry on his scattered enterprises.

And he left a more important heritage in terms of values that would come to be a preoccupation among the Jewish first families as they moved to positions of money and social acceptance. As Harmon Hendricks' little daughter Roselane put it in 1834, when she was fourteen years old, in her copybook of "Daily Compositions," written in a careful schoolgirlish hand: "Education is one of the most important subjects to which our attention can be directed. It is to education alone that we are indebted for the formation of our minds, the improvement of our understandings, and the developing of our faculties.... It is education which elevates our mind towards that Great Being from whence every good flows."

THE FIREBRAND

What the American Jewish community required was a man to serve as its conscience. At least this was the contention of young Uriah Phillips Levy of Philadelphia, who seems to have decided at a very early age that he would fill that role. To him it was a question of assimilation—and loss of all that it meant to be a Sephardic Jew—or of continuity, and he placed tremendous value on the latter. He thoroughly disapproved of what he had heard was going on in cities such as New Orleans, and of men such as Judah Touro, who were Jews with only half their hearts. He disapproved of fellow Philadelphians such as the Franks girls, who seemed not only to care nothing about their country but to care less about their faith, being bent apparently only on marrying titled Englishmen. He disapproved of his Levy cousins Samson, Benjamin, and Nathan—the latter had been David Franks's partner—who danced at the Assembly, joined Christian clubs, and paid only lip service to their noble heritage. Their children were all marrying Christians and converting. Uriah Phillips Levy believed that American Jews needed Great Men—the kind who would stand up foursquarely as *Americans*, and just as foursquarely as *Jews*, who would assume positions of leadership in American institutions, but on their own Jewish terms. It was a large order to give to an already seriously fragmented and disunified group of people, but Uriah Levy gave it. He was small in stature, but his ego was more vast than the whole of the new republic. Equally sizable was the chip that Uriah Levy carried, through most of his life, on his diminutive shoulder.

To be a crusader, a setter-to-rights, he regarded as part of his birthright. He was, after all, a Philadelphia Levy. His family, Uriah Levy felt, were in no way to be taken lightly. After all, George Washington had been at his grandparents' wedding. His great-great-grandfather had been the personal physician to King John V of Portugal. The Levy family had made all the proper in-the-group marriages. One of Uriah's sisters had married a Hendricks, another a Lopez—one of Aaron Lopez' West Indian cousins. Though Uriah's family was sometimes referred to as "the poor branch" (the Samson Levys were considerably richer), the Levys were nothing if not proud.

In 1806, when Uriah Levy announced that he intended to embark upon a naval career, he was barely fourteen years old. He had already learned to identify, from their silhouettes, the names and flags of all the ships that entered and departed Philadelphia harbor. He first signed on as a cabin boy, with duties, among other things, of making up the captain's bunk. By autumn of the following year, pressures were building toward the War of 1812, and President Jefferson declared an embargo on all American trade with Europe. This meant that the shipping industry fell idle, and Uriah used this time to attend a navigation school in Philadelphia, where it was quickly apparent that he was brilliant.

The American Navy, at this time, was closely modeled after the British. Its officer class consisted of men with old-school ties, who all "knew" each other, who regarded themselves as "gentlemen." U.S. naval officers, in other words, constituted a kind of club, with rules and rituals and membership requirements that were inflexible. No Jew had ever been a U.S. naval officer, and it was unthinkable that one should ever wish or try to be. Uriah Levy had chosen for his arena the institution of American life where the Jew's role had always been the weakest, the most capitulating, where Jews had traditionally been given the least power and the meanest jobs.

In 1809, the Embargo Act was lifted, and Uriah Levy—now a naval school graduate—was back in service. It wasn't long before he had his first run-in with the power structure.

In the years between the two wars, British impressment gangs prowled the streets of American port cities looking for susceptible young men whom they could literally shanghai into the British Navy. American men who carried the proper documents were usually immune from this sort of danger,

however, and Uriah Levy had naturally taken pains to have his “protection certificate” up to date and in order. As a result, when the cry of “Press gang!” rang through a Philadelphia tavern one afternoon—and most of the young men in the place headed quickly for the back door—Uriah Levy remained calm, sipping his coffee.

A squad of British marines, in white breeches and blue coats, with tall red plumes sprouting from fat shakos, marched into the room with rifles at port, and demanded to see Uriah’s credentials. Uriah withdrew his certificate from his breast pocket. One of the marines took the certificate, scanned it, looked at Uriah, and said, “You don’t look like an American to me. You look like a Jew.”

Uriah replied coolly, “I am an American and a Jew.”

“If the Americans have Jew peddlers manning their ships, it’s no wonder they sail so badly,” the sergeant said.

The Levy temper took over. Uriah immediately doubled his fist and struck the British sergeant in the jaw. A second member of the press gang promptly raised his rifle butt and felled Uriah with a single blow. When he regained consciousness, Uriah Levy was in the brig of a British cutter named the *Vermyra*, bound for Jamaica.

Uriah spent several miserable weeks slaving as a deckhand on the British ship. He was repeatedly ordered to be sworn into His Majesty’s Navy, and each time refused with the polite and formal statement: “Sir, I cannot take the oath. I am an American and I cannot swear allegiance to your king. And I am a Hebrew, and do not swear on your testament, or with my head uncovered.” Obviously, the commander of the *Vermyra* realized he had a somewhat unusual situation on his hands. Possibly his uncertainty as to what a Jew actually was caused him to treat Uriah Levy with some deference. The young man’s stiff and haughty attitude, and carefully phrased responses, hinted that the captain was in the presence of a Personage. At Jamaica, Uriah was permitted an audience with Sir Alexander Cochrane—the Briton who, a few years later, would order the city of Washington, D.C., put to the torch. Uriah, however, found Sir Alexander sympathetic and disapproving of the practice of impressment. Sir Alexander looked over Uriah’s papers, said that they appeared to be authentic, and announced that Uriah could be released provided he made his

own way back to the United States. Within a few weeks, he was back in Philadelphia again.

In 1811, Uriah Levy had saved enough money to purchase a one-third interest in a 138-ton schooner named the *George Washington*—from the first names of his other partners, George Mesoncourt and Washington Garrison. Levy was designated the ship's master. "By this time," he wrote, with unfailingly breezy self-confidence, in his memoirs, "I had passed through every grade of service—cabin boy, ordinary seaman, able-bodied seaman, boatswain, third, second, and first mates, to that of captain. By means of my eight years' experience and instruction afloat and ashore, I had become familiar with every part of my profession—from the sculling of the compass to the taking of the altitude of the sun; from the splicing of a rope to the fishing of a mainmast; from the holding of a reel to the heaving to of a ship in a gale of wind." He was perhaps the first commander in the history of American shipping to nail a mezuzah outside his cabin door; it was a gift from his proud Jewish mother. When he took command of the *George Washington*, Uriah Levy was only nineteen years old.

His first command involved a cargo of corn, which Uriah carried to the Canary Islands and sold for 2,500 Spanish dollars. He then took on a second cargo of Canary wine and headed for the Cape Verde Islands, off the coast of Africa.

When he arrived at the Isle of May in the Cape Verde group, Levy anchored and began what turned out to be an extended stay. He remained at anchor offshore nearly three weeks all told, and in his copious memoirs he never satisfactorily explained the reasons for his stay—nor why, inexplicably, he never attempted to unload his wine. Did he spend these weeks studying the slave trade? Possibly. The Cape Verde Islands lie off Africa's western coastal bulge, along which was strung the chain of slaving "castles." During his stay, Levy became friendly with another American captain, Levi Joy, and the two men spent considerable time together. Captain Joy was definitely involved in the slave trade, and might have been regarded as a certain kind of expert at it. He and Uriah Levy met frequently ashore for meals and exchanged visits on each other's ships. What did they talk about? It is impossible to say, and hard to know what Uriah's feelings about the slave trade might have been, because his visit to the Isle of May was terminated in dramatic fashion.

At dinner one night aboard Captain Joy's ship, Uriah was suddenly interrupted by an excited pair of his crewmen, who clambered on board from the *George Washington's* dinghy, crying, "Sir, your ship has been stolen!" Uriah rushed to the rail and watched as his ship, under full sail, disappeared over the horizon. It was the last he ever saw of her. A treacherous first mate and a couple of accomplices among the crew had plotted the piracy. With them went all of Uriah Levy's Spanish dollars, and all his casks of Canary Island wine. By the time he made his way home, an impoverished maritime hitchhiker, America was at war with England for a second time.

For his war service, Uriah Levy had two choices. He could sign on a privateer—an often lucrative occupation, particularly if one was successful at capturing enemy ships and splitting up the booty—or he could join the United States Navy as a sailing master, at a modest forty dollars a month. Though it afforded "little prospect of promotion and little gain," as he put it, the Navy "furnished the best proof of love to my country." Also, this was clearly where he was aiming. On October 21, 1812, after a visit to a Boston tailor, Uriah Phillips Levy made his first appearance in the full uniform of the United States Navy as it was in the War of 1812: "A dark blue double-breasted coat, with a rolling collar with two loops of gold lace on each side; blue woolen pantaloons and white stockings; black silk cravat with a white shirt, and a black cocked hat."

He cut a dashing figure, for he was slim and well built, with dark hair, curling sideburns, and a perfectly clipped and curled handlebar moustache. His earliest naval assignments took him frequently to Manhattan, where he attended synagogue at Shearith Israel, was entertained at the best teas and dinner dances, and was frequently seen strolling with well-placed young ladies along State Street and Battery Walk. In New York he heard rumors that the brig *Argus*, which had been anchored in the bay for several months, was preparing to break the British blockade. Uriah borrowed a rowboat, rowed over to the *Argus*, and presented himself to her commander. "Knowing that the cruise of the *Argus* could not fail to be a stirring one," he wrote, "and hoping she might meet the enemy in such circumstances as to permit a battle, I sought and obtained permission to join her as a volunteer."

The career of the *Argus* has become one of the greatest in the annals of U.S. naval history. Her first task, with Uriah aboard, was to carry—through

the blockade—America’s new minister to France, William H. Crawford. During the crossing, Levy was able, as he put it, “to gain the confidence and friendship of this eminent and most upright man.” This friendship was to stand Levy in good stead later on.

After depositing Crawford on the coast of France, the *Argus* went on to become “the dreaded ghost ship,” the raider that haunted the English and Bristol channels, that cruised the English and Irish coasts, attacking and destroying much larger ships, the ship whose very name was said to strike terror in the hearts of British sailors. At one point, with Uriah Levy at the helm, the *Argus* found itself—at dawn, in heavy fog—in the middle of a British squadron. Ghostlike, it made its way through and was not spotted until it was out of reach of the enemy cannon. In its many gory encounters, the decks of the *Argus* were spread with wet sand so that the fighting crew of the “phantom raider” would not slither in the blood. When the *Argus* was finally captured, the ship was held in such respect that its crew was greeted with three cheers by the British. The final battle was “kept up with great spirit on both sides,” and when the captain, who lost his leg in the encounter, was captured and taken to Britain, he became a kind of folk hero during the several months before he died of his wounds, uttering to his men, “God bless you, my lads, we shall not meet again.”

Unfortunately, Uriah had no part in these final glories. One of the ships that the *Argus* had overtaken carried a cargo of sugar, which was considered a bit too valuable to be put to the torch at sea. Uriah Levy was assigned to take her and her sugar across the channel to France. A day later, the new ship, heavy with sugar, virtually unarmed, encountered a British merchantman with eight gun carronades on each side and long guns forward and amidships. To defend the little ship was hopeless. Uriah surrendered and was carried off to England, and to Dartmoor Prison.

Charles Andrews, a prisoner at Dartmoor for three years, wrote:

Any man sent to Dartmoor might have exclaimed:

“Hail, horrors! Hail, thou profoundest hell!

Receive thy new possessor.”

For any man ordered to this prison counted himself lost.

A Philadelphia gentleman by upbringing, a Jewish aristocrat by instinct, Uriah worked at keeping up his health and his spirits. The winter of 1813–1814, which he spent at Dartmoor, was one of the hardest in British history, and the Thames froze solidly to the bottom. Levy was confined at Dartmoor for sixteen months and, by the time he was released, in an exchange of British and American prisoners, the war was over.

At Dartmoor, he had accomplished a few things. He had taught himself French, with the help of French prisoners. He had learned to fence. He had had a book, the *New American Practical Navigator*, which he read over and over again. But one thing he had most wanted to do in prison he had been unable to do. He had tried to organize a Jewish congregation. But Jewish law requires that there be a minyan, or quorum, of at least ten Jews before the Sabbath or any public prayer can be celebrated. Uriah could find only four at Dartmoor.

Back home again in Philadelphia, a friend took Uriah Levy aside and counseled him not to continue his Navy career in peacetime. “Nine out of ten of your superiors may not care a fig that you are a Jew,” the friend warned him. “But the tenth may make your life a hell.” Uriah, however, was by now a man with a mission. He struck a pose and replied, according to his memoirs: “What will be the future of our Navy if others such as I refuse to serve because of the prejudices of a few? There will be other Hebrews, in times to come, of whom America will have need. By serving myself, I will help give them a chance to serve.”*

He was ready for his next round with the Establishment, and he did not have long to wait. Dancing in full uniform at Philadelphia’s Patriots’ Ball, he brushed shoulders accidentally with a young naval officer, Lieutenant William Potter. Or was it an accident? A few minutes later, Lieutenant Potter collided with him again, this time with more force. Moments later, the lieutenant crashed into Levy and his partner a third time. Uriah turned and smartly slapped the lieutenant across the face. An enlisted man had struck an officer. “You damned Jew!” Potter cried. A crowd gathered, and several of Potter’s fellow officers, murmuring that Potter had had too much to drink, led him off the floor while he continued to shout insults and obscenities. The music resumed, Levy and his partner returned to the floor, and Uriah assumed that the incident was over. The next morning, however,

an emissary from Lieutenant Potter appeared on board Uriah's ship, the *Franklin*, carrying a written challenge to a duel.

Dueling had become extremely fashionable in the United States. Duels were fought for the slightest of excuses, and an elaborate framework of rules and ritual grew up around them. Technically against the law, dueling existed in a kind of limbo within the law, with its own, unwritten set of statutes.

Law cases involving deaths through dueling had also to contend with the mystical duelists' code. And, meanwhile, all the best people dueled. In the fifty years between 1798 and 1848, deaths from dueling were two-thirds the number of those from wars, and 20 percent of those who fought in duels were killed. Perhaps one of the charms of dueling was that when a duel was over, both combatants—the victor and the loser—were elevated to the rank of heroes. To have fought a duel—whether to have won or lost—was one of a man's surest ways to achieve social success.

Uriah Levy was not at all anxious to fight a duel over the matter of a dance-floor insult from a drunken lieutenant. But when he demurred, offering to shake hands with Potter and forget the whole thing, he was warned that if he did so he would be labeled a coward. And it was true, according to the code duello, that "a man who makes arms his profession cannot with honor decline an invitation from a professional or social equal." Uriah wrote later that he "wanted to be the first Jew to rise to high rank in the Navy, not be the first Jewish officer killed in a duel." But the code left him no way out. A date was selected, seconds were chosen. The weapons were agreed upon: pistols.

When the date and hour arrived, a sizable audience had gathered. There were a number of Uriah's shipmates off the *Franklin*, an equal number of friends and fellow officers of Potter, the two men's seconds and their friends, the mandatory physician, a judge, and a crowd of Philadelphians who had come out to see the show. Thus what happened is well attested to by witnesses. A distance of twenty paces was chosen. This was somewhat farther apart than most duelists elected to stand. Ten paces was a commoner stand-off distance, and even shorter distances—of two paces, or even one—were frequently selected, with the result that both duelists, firing at each other from arm's length, were virtually guaranteed death. But both Levy and Potter were rated as excellent shots, and so the greater stretch of ground

between them may have been regarded as a test of marksmanship. The judge asked each man whether he had anything to say. Uriah Levy asked permission to utter a Hebrew prayer, the Shema, and then in a characteristic gesture said: "I also wish to state that, although I am a crack shot, I shall not fire at my opponent. I suggest it would be wiser if this ridiculous affair be abandoned." "Coward!" Potter shouted in reply. "Gentlemen, no further words," the judge instructed, and began his count.

Both men turned to face each other. Potter fired first, missing Uriah widely. Uriah then raised his arm straight up and fired a bullet into the air. The duel might have ended there, for Potter could have considered his honor satisfied, but Uriah's gesture clearly had enraged him. He began reloading his pistol for a second round and Uriah, according to the code, was required to do the same. The second volley ended with the same results, Potter missing his mark and Uriah firing skyward. Now, like a man possessed, Lieutenant Potter began reloading a third time and, perhaps because his fury was affecting his aim, the third series of shots was a repetition of the first two. But clearly the affair had gone too far for sanity, and the seconds and a number of Potter's friends rushed in to try to persuade him to abandon the duel "with honor," but he would have none of it. For a fourth time he reloaded and fired at Uriah, missing again. On Uriah's side of the field, his friends shouted to him to kill Potter, but once again Uriah merely reached into the air and fired. He then cried out to Potter's aides, "Gentlemen, stop him or I must!"

But Lieutenant Potter was at this point beyond control. He reloaded for a fifth shot and, screaming, "Stand back! I mean to have his life!" fired again, nicking Uriah's left ear. Blood spurted across his face and shoulder. This time, Uriah held his fire altogether. Then, as Potter reloaded for a sixth shot, Uriah's limits of patience and temper were reached. Shouting, "Very well, I'll spoil his dancing," Uriah for the first time took aim and fired at his opponent. From his remark about dancing, the audience assumed that Uriah Levy intended to shoot the lieutenant in the leg. But the bullet struck him in the chest, Lieutenant Potter fell to the ground without a word, and was immediately pronounced dead by the doctor.

It was, everyone agreed, an extraordinary duel. Potter had behaved extraordinarily badly, and Levy had conducted himself extraordinarily well. There were, however, some unfortunate realities to be faced. In the eyes of

the law, Uriah Phillips Levy had committed a murder. In the eyes of the United States Navy, an important bylaw of the club had been breached. An enlisted man—a mere sailing master—had not only slapped, but now had killed, an officer. No one, least of all Uriah Levy, was sure how this might affect a man whose ambition was already “to rise to high rank in the Navy,” and to set an example for future Jews to follow.

The affair created a stir of major proportions in Philadelphia. The press praised him for the way “Levy fired shots in the air, and then for the first time fired at his antagonist, and with the unerring certainty of a true marksman, made him bite the dust.” Uriah was particularly idolized by his fellow crew members on the *Franklin*. But there was an element, and a strong one, in Philadelphia that was less than happy with the outcome of the duel, and said so. Lieutenant Potter might have been a boor and a drunk, but he had been a popular young man about Philadelphia parties. Levy might have been astonishingly coolheaded and brave, but he was, despite his proper connections, nonetheless—to some—an “outsider.” It was, after all, a case of a Jew having killed a Christian. The Navy commodore investigating the episode decided that Uriah had been neither the provocator nor the aggressor in the case, and dismissed it without action. But the Philadelphia grand jury felt otherwise, and handed down an indictment for “making a challenge to a duel.”

Almost immediately, Uriah was in another difficulty. One Sunday morning shortly after the duel, he walked into the wardroom aboard the *Franklin* for breakfast. In one corner of the room sat a certain Lieutenant Bond, breakfasting with two other officers. Uriah seated himself at a table on the opposite side of the room. The table was cluttered with used crockery and partly filled coffee cups, and Uriah asked a passing cabin boy to please clear it for him. Instantly, Lieutenant Bond was on his feet shouting that Uriah had no right to give orders to cabin boys. Uriah replied that he had given no orders, but had merely asked that the table be cleared. Bond answered that he had heard Uriah order the cabin boy to bring him breakfast. Uriah replied that he had not, and suddenly, amid shouts of “Liar!” “No gentleman!” and “Dictator!” the fight was on. Both men were on their feet, and it took the other two officers in the room plus two cabin boys to prevent them from coming to blows. And presently Bond was calling Uriah a “damned Jew.”

In the lengthy transcript of the court-martial that followed—a trial which, in Navy history, has been called “the Breakfast Court Martial” and “the Tempest in the Coffee Cups”—there is endless testimony not only about who accused whom of what, but also about how many dishes were on the table at the time, their degree of dirtiness, whether soiled coffee cups or tea cups were involved, and what the various participants in the fracas were wearing. It is hard to see why all this was taken so seriously, and yet it was. Uriah made a long and impassioned speech in which he added patriotism, honor, manliness, and duty to the other issues in the case. It ended at last in a draw. Both Uriah and Lieutenant Bond were ordered reprimanded by the Secretary of the Navy for un-naval behavior.

But while all this trivial and generally undignified business was going on, things were looking up for Uriah Levy again. In Philadelphia, the dueling case had come to trial in the civilian court and, despite the fact that public sentiment had been running against him, Uriah had been acquitted by the jury. The foreman, in fact, had risen from the jury box to add to its decision that “any man brave enough to fire in the air and let his opponent take deadly aim at him, deserved his life.”

And so, despite the fact that naval court-martial proceedings were under way against him, Uriah took the unusual step of applying for a commission in the Navy. He was applying under the rule which stated that “Masters of extraordinary merit, and for extraordinary services, may be promoted to Lieutenant.” His friends who saw him as a man involved in two actions—one civil and one military—begged him to wait until the fuss had died down. But Uriah, confident of his extraordinary capabilities, plunged ahead. His commission was signed by President Monroe on March 5, 1817. The U.S. Navy had a Jewish officer at last.

The first thing Uriah did when he had donned his gold-fringed lieutenant’s epaulets was to have his portrait painted by Thomas Sully. Sully always romanticized his subjects—which was certainly the key to his great popularity—and generously overlooked their physical shortcomings. So we must not take the Sully portrait of Uriah Levy entirely at face value. But it portrays a striking figure. Uriah’s face in the portrait is the face of a boy—he was twenty-five that year—clean-jawed, with a straight nose, wide forehead, large and arresting black eyes, a mop of dark curly hair, and dashing Rhett Butler sideburns. Sully exaggerates Uriah’s slight build so

that his figure appears almost girl-like, frail and delicate, the slim legs almost spidery. Yet as he stands in the portrait, arms folded across his chest, the picture pulses with haughtiness, arrogance, defiance. The picture has been described as making Uriah Levy look “a little vain, more than a little handsome, and very determined.”

The officer corps of the United States Navy was not at all sure how it wished to treat this brash young upstart. The first few months of Uriah’s lieutenancy were particularly difficult for him aboard his ship, the *Franklin*. A former enlisted man was, after all, now an officer. A man who had taken commands was now giving them. The *Franklin*’s other officers, with whom Uriah had once worked cheerfully, as well as the enlisted men, who had once been his equals, all looked at him now with distrust and disdain. The friends who had cheered him in his duel and in the ordeal after it were suddenly chilly and aloof. Uriah had a long voyage to England, and then to Sicily, in this hostile atmosphere, before he was notified that he was to be transferred to the frigate *United States*.

The *United States* was one of the Navy’s most prestigious addresses. The ship had been the heroine of several important battles in the 1812 war and she had, in the process, become known as a “gentlemen’s ship.” Nowhere was the clublike nature of the Navy more apparent. The great Stephen Decatur (“our country, right or wrong”) had been the *United States*’s commander when the ship had overcome and captured H.M.S. *Macedonian*, and now she was captained by the equally aristocratic William Crane, a man of whom it was said that he “believed his blood ran bluer than all the rest.”

The day before Uriah was to report, Captain Crane dispatched a long letter to Commodore Charles Stewart, in charge of the Navy’s Mediterranean Fleet. In it, Captain Crane argued vaguely about Uriah being a “disturbing influence,” and suggested that he might create “disharmony” among the ship’s other officers. In concluding the letter he said flatly: “Considerations of a personal nature render Lieutenant Levy particularly objectionable, and I trust he will not be forced on me.”

It is seldom in the Navy that an officer attempts to tell a superior what to do. But Captain Crane’s letter displays a great deal of confidence, and it is likely that he thought he stood a good chance of getting his way. And he may have. Though the commodore is said to have been “boiling mad” at Crane’s note, his reply—signed “Your obedient servant”—is both a lengthy

and a mealymouthed affair, when one would have thought that a terse note of reprimand would have been in order. It is clear that Commodore Stewart realized that he was involved in a ticklish situation, and that Lieutenant Levy's Jewishness was what it was all about. In his reply, Commodore Stewart "regrets exceedingly" having to disappoint his captain and, after several conciliatory paragraphs, he adds: "Should you be possessed of a knowledge of any conduct on the part of Lieutenant Levy which would render him unworthy of the commission he holds, I would at the request of any commander represent it to the government. As your letter contains no specific notice of his misconduct, I can find nothing therein whereupon to find a reason for countermanding the order for changing his destination."

The commodore showed both Crane's and his own letter to Uriah, assured him that "everything would be all right," and the next morning Uriah set off to present himself to his new commander. Navy protocol required that an arriving officer pay two visits to his captain—the first, briefly and formally to present his orders, and the second, a longer social visit to be carried out within forty-eight hours. But when Uriah was admitted to his cabin, Captain Crane, without even looking up from his desk, said, "The *United States* has as many officers as I need or want." He ordered that Uriah be escorted off his ship and back to the *Franklin*. Now Crane was not merely advising, but defying, a superior officer.

This, it turned out, was too much for the commodore, who now wrote:

SIR:

Lt. U. P. Levy will report to you for duty on board the frigate *United States* under your command.

It is not without regret that a second order is found necessary to change the position of one officer in this squadron.

CHARLES STEWART

In humiliating fashion, Uriah was rowed back to the *United States* to present his orders a second time. Crane kept him waiting outside his cabin for over two hours. Then, ordering him in, Crane glanced at the letter, handed it back to Uriah, and muttered, "So be it." He returned to his paperwork. He did not so much as rise, offer a handshake, or even return Uriah's salute. Uriah carried his gear to the wardroom. There he was told by

another officer—there were only eight others aboard—that theirs had been “a very pleasant and harmonious officers’ mess,” until now.

It was aboard the *United States* that Uriah was required to witness his first flogging. The practice was commonplace. American naval regulations were based on the British Articles of War, which dated back to the earliest days of the Restoration, when they had been formulated by the Duke of York, Lord High Admiral of the British Navy, who later became King James II. Flogging was advocated as the most practical way to maintain discipline and order on shipboard, and its benefits had been touted by commanders for generations. “Low company,” Commodore Edward Thompson had written, “is the bane of all young men, but in a man-of-war you have the collected filth of jails. The scenes of horror and infamy on board are many.” Thus, the horror of flogging was merely another to be endured. By the nineteenth century, when sailors stripped to the waist to work, it was not remarkable to see that the backs of many of them were solidly ridged and bubbled with scar tissue.

Often a flogging was so severe as to destroy the muscle tissue of a man’s back and shoulders, thus making him unable to work and useless to the Navy. A captain was given great latitude in terms of meting out the penalty and, needless to say, the practice was often abused by sadistic commanders. It was prescribed for such misdeeds as “keeping low company”—a euphemism for drunkenness—for profanity, and “For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge.”* Flogging could also be ordered for such relatively minor offenses as “spitting in the deck,” or for “looking sullen.” There were also more severe punishments available. Keelhauling was still practiced in the Navy and, for the crime of murder, a man might be tied to the mouth of a cannon. Then the cannon was fired.

Uriah had been aboard the *United States* only a few weeks when Captain Crane issued the order for all hands to appear on deck. A middle-aged gunner’s mate had come back from shoreleave drunk, and had been noisy and abusive. Thirty lashes had been ordered, a relatively moderate sentence. Uriah now saw how, over the centuries, flogging had been perfected to the point where it was almost an art form of its own. The first few blows of the lash softened the muscles of the back. The fourth or fifth blow broke the skin. Then an expert with the lash could direct his blows so that they fell in a symmetrical crisscross pattern, so that the flesh of the back was cut in

equal diamond-shaped pieces. An alternate stood by in case the first man wielding the lash grew tired. Also, several extra “cats” were provided so that when one of them grew too slippery from blood to be gripped, another could be substituted. Men had been known to remain standing through as many as sixty strokes of the lash, but the gunner’s mate, not young, fainted several times during his ordeal, and was unconscious when it was over. He was at last cut down from the rack where he had been tied, spread-eagled, and pails of salt water were poured over his raw and bleeding flesh.

Uriah, sickened by the hideous spectacle, nonetheless forced himself to watch it, never once diverting his eyes. For weeks after the experience, he could talk of nothing else but the brutality of flogging as a punishment. This did little to further endear him to his fellow officers. Not only was he a Jew, but there was also something subversive about him. It was whispered that Uriah Levy disapproved of Navy discipline, but Uriah had found another crusade.

Uriah had been able to make only one friend on the ship, its executive officer, a young man named Thomas Catesby Jones, who had counseled him: “Do your duty as an officer and a gentleman. Be civil to all, and the first man who pursues a different course to you, call him to a strict and proper account.” It was good advice, but advice that was difficult for Uriah to follow. One night, for example, when Uriah was standing watch on deck, he saw two young cabin boys dash up a companionway, pursued, it appeared, by a boatswain’s mate named Porter, who held what looked like a whip in his hand. When Uriah halted Porter, and asked him why he was whipping the boys, Porter answered him in what Uriah considered an “insolent and mocking” tone. Uriah slapped Porter across the cheek with the back of his hand. Within an hour, Uriah was called before his superior officers and—in the presence of Porter—was asked to explain his actions. Uriah considered *this* a severe breach of Navy etiquette, and cried out, “Sir, I am not to be called to account in this way in front of a boatswain!” Warned that he was being disrespectful, Uriah replied, “And you, sir, are treating me in an equally disrespectful manner.” Uriah was then ordered to his cabin and warned, “You will hear more of this.” He did—his second court-martial, in which he was charged with disobedience of orders, contempt of a superior officer, and unofficerlike conduct. The president of the court-martial was Captain Crane, a circumstance not likely to benefit

the defendant. He was found guilty on all three charges and sentenced to be “dismissed from the U.S.S. Frigate *United States* and not allowed to serve on board.”

Actually, such a sentence—over such a petty matter—was so unusual as to be considered irregular, and when the case was reviewed by the naval commander in chief, President James Monroe reversed the sentence. But when this news reached Uriah Levy he was already in trouble again over a matter that was, if anything, even more trifling. This time it was a rowboat. Lieutenant Levy had ordered a boat to row him ashore. Told that his boat was ready, he arrived on deck. When he was about to board the boat, another lieutenant, named Williamson, told him the boat was not his. Uriah insisted it was. Williamson repeated that it wasn't. Presently both men were shouting epithets at each other, including “Liar!” “Scoundrel!” “Rascal!” “Coward!” and so on. In a rage, Uriah went back to his cabin and dashed off the following note to Williamson:

SIR:

The attack which you were pleased to make on my feelings this afternoon, in saying I prevaricated, thereby insulting me in the grossest manner without any cause on my part, demands that you should make such concessions as the case requires before these gentlemen in whose presence I was insulted—or to have a personal interview tomorrow morning at the Navy Yard, at which time, if you please, I expect a direct answer.

Uriah delivered the note to Williamson's cabin in person. The lieutenant flung the note, unread, in Uriah's face and slammed the door.

Brandishing his letter, Uriah went ashore that night, according to subsequent testimony, into “taverns and divers places,” reading the letter to anyone who would listen, giving a high-pitched account of the rowboat incident, and, in the process, he “wickedly and maliciously uttered and published false, slanderous, scandalous, and opprobrious words concerning Lt. Williamson, including poltroon, coward, and scoundrel, as well as rogue and rascal.” This was very bad Navy form. Lieutenant Williamson took action the following morning, and court-martial number three was under way. Uriah was charged with “using provoking and reproachful words, treating his superior officer with contempt, and teaching others who chose

to learn from his example to make use of falsehood as an easy convenience, with scandalous conduct tending to the destruction of good morals, and attempting to leave the ship without permission from the officer of the deck.” These were much more serious charges than any that had been leveled against him before, and to these was added an even graver one. He was accused of “being addicted to the vice of lying.”

For his defense, he turned to the only course that seemed open to him. He accused his fellow officers of anti-Semitism. At the end of his trial, he took the stand and said:

I am of the faith which has never been endured in Christendom 'til the Constitution of the United States raised us to a level with our fellow citizens of every religious denomination. I need not apprise you that I have been designated in the language of idle scorn “the Jew!” Perhaps I have been thus reproached by those who recognize neither the God of Moses nor of Christ. May I not say that I have been marked out to common contempt as a Jew until the slow unmoving finger of scorn has drawn a circle round me that includes all friendships and companions and attachments and all the blandishments of life and leaves me isolated and alone in the very midst of society....

To be a Jew as the world now stands is an act of faith that no Christian martyrdom can exceed—for in every corner of the earth but one it consists in this, to be excluded from almost every advantage of society. Although the sufferers of my race have had the trust and confidence of all their Christian Revilers as their commercial agents throughout the world, they have been cut off from some of the most substantial benefits of the social company in Europe. They cannot inherit or devise at law, they could not 'til lately sit as jurors or testify as witnesses. They could not educate their children in their own faith. Children were encouraged to abandon their parents and their God, to rob a father of his estate—a rich Jewess might have been ravished or stolen and the law afforded no remedy—these heart-rending cruel distinctions have been gradually and imperceptibly worn down by the resistless current of time, but they have in no instance been voluntarily obliterated by an act of Christian charity.

But I beg to make the most solemn appeal to the pure and heavenly spirit of universal toleration that pervades the constitution of the United States in

the presence of this court; whether before a court-martial in the American Navy, whoever may be the party arraigned, be he Jew or Gentile, Christian or pagan, shall he not have the justice done him which forms the essential principle of the best maxim of all their code, “Do unto others as ye would have them do unto you.”

With its references to “the social company in Europe,” and to ravished Jewish maidens, Uriah’s speech must have seemed completely beside the point. Though everything he said was true, and though his remarks reveal much of what he was feeling at the time, certainly none of this sank in with the officers of the court-martial. After all, in early-nineteenth-century America, the concept of anti-Semitism, or even of religious prejudice, was such an exotic one—so removed from what most Americans thought about and talked about and read about—that, to the judges hearing Uriah’s case, a charge of prejudice seemed a non sequitur.

The court reached a quick and unanimous verdict: guilty. Uriah was sentenced “to be cashiered out of the Naval service of the United States.”

It was early spring, 1819. He was only twenty-seven years old, and his Navy career appeared ended. He entered a long period of funk, and for many months he disappeared from sight, refusing to go back to Philadelphia, where he would have to face his family, disgraced. For nearly two years he wandered about Europe. At one point, his widow wrote many years later, he lived in Paris, where “he met a lady of title in whom he became very much interested, and they were very much in love with each other. Lieutenant Levy would have married her, only she refused to return with him to America. But as his one ambition in life was to rise in the navy, he returned to his beloved country unmarried.”

He returned to America because an astonishing thing happened. It took twenty-three months for the court-martial proceedings to reach the President’s desk for review, but when they did, Monroe once more reversed them, noting that: “Although Lieutenant Levy’s conduct merited censure, it is considered that his long suspension from the service has been a sufficient punishment for his offense. The sentence of the court is therefore disapproved, and he is returned to duty.”

Once again his honor had been satisfied. On the other hand, he found now that wherever he went his reputation as a hothead had preceded him,

and that now he was *expected* to throw tantrums and slap senior officers with gloves. Instead of becoming the conscience of American Jews, the “terrible-tempered Lieutenant Levy” was becoming something of a legendary Navy figure. Uriah found himself good-naturedly teased and goaded about his dueling and multiple courts-martial, and egged into arguments. And so, not surprisingly, it wasn’t long before he erupted again.

This time his adversary was a lieutenant named William Weaver. In the presence of one of Uriah’s friends, Weaver had called Uriah a “great scoundrel” and a “thoroughgoing rascal.” His friend reported these slurs to Uriah, who was typically enraged and who immediately dashed off one of his indignant letters to Weaver. The letter was not answered. A few days later, however, an article, heavy with suggestive italics, appeared in a Washington newspaper:

If convicted of charges proved, the leniency of naval courts-martial has become proverbial—so that the sitting of a court-martial generally eventuates in a reprimand. If, however, and what is very common, the guilty officer should be *cashiered*, as in a recent *case*, he sets himself to work with *political friends of his tribe*, and loaded with papers, presents himself at Washington, the strong arm of the executive is palsied. *He dare not approve the justly merited sentence*; the culprit is retained.

The allusion was obviously to Uriah. The article was unsigned, but Uriah was able to discover that its author was Weaver.

Uriah’s first assignment on being reinstated was to the *Spark*, on duty in the Mediterranean. He boarded the *Spark* in June, 1821, and remained aboard her until the following March, when the ship docked at Charleston, South Carolina. In those intervening months, it seemed, Uriah had done nothing but vilify the character of Lieutenant Weaver, making, to anyone who would listen, such comments as: “Weaver is a coward, a damned rascal, a scoundrel and no gentleman,” “Weaver is an errant bastard,” and “If I ever run into the damned rascal, I’ll tweak his nose.” These remarks had made their way to Weaver, now stationed at the Charleston Naval Yard. Uriah, upon debarking, was met with a summons to a court-martial, his fourth, charged with “scandalous conduct—using provoking reproachful words—ungentlemanly conduct—forgery and falsification.”

Forgery, of course, was a new charge. It related to the fact that Uriah had carried around a copy of his indignant note to Weaver, with its challenging accusations, had shown the note to many people, whereas Weaver now maintained that he had never received the note, and that it was a forgery. The court found Uriah guilty of scandalous conduct, and noted that “he did suffer others to read a note purporting to be a challenge.” The other charges were dropped. The court ordered that Uriah be “publically reprimanded.” But the court also scolded Lieutenant Weaver. “The court,” the judges wrote, “in passing this sentence, cannot, however, forbear expressing their disapprobation of the behavior of the prosecutor toward the prisoner in so far as the circumstances thereof have come before them in evidence.” So Uriah’s court-martial number four ended more or less in a draw. But it began to seem as though sooner or later either he or the United States Navy would have to change its ways.

In 1823, Uriah was assigned as second lieutenant on the *Cyane*, which was being transferred from the Mediterranean to the Brazil Squadron. The ship made a slow crossing of the Atlantic, putting in at various West Indies ports before heading for the northern coast of South America. At Rio de Janeiro, the ship anchored for repairs to its mainmast, and Uriah was put in charge of these. Normally, it seemed, such repairs were handled by the executive officer, but the captain had casually commented that Uriah could supervise the repairs as well as anyone. This angered the *Cyane*’s executive officer, William Spencer, and presently word had reached Uriah that Spencer was “out to bring him to his knees.”

One afternoon while the repairs were going on, Uriah came aboard carrying a wide slab of Brazilian mahogany with which he intended to build a bookshelf for his cabin. A certain Lieutenant Ellery, a friend of the wounded Spencer, commented in “a sneering tone” that he thought rather little of officers who stole lumber from ships’ stores. Uriah replied that he had bought the wood in town, and had the bill of sale in his pocket. Ellery said that he doubted this, since Uriah was known by everyone to be a liar. In a rage, Uriah challenged Ellery to a duel, to which Ellery answered that he would not fight a duel with a man who was not a gentleman. He would, furthermore, report the challenge to the commanding officer.

For several days, the affair simmered, and seemed about to die down until it bubbled up again in another burst of pettishness. In the officers’

mess someone said loudly that “some damned fool” had dismissed the steward. “If you meant that for me ...” Uriah put in quickly, always the first to detect an insult. “Don’t speak to me, Levy,” said Executive Officer Spencer, “or I’ll gag you.” Instantly Uriah was on his feet, crying, “If you think you’re able, you may try!” And there it was, all over again—shouts of “No gentleman!” “Coward!” “Jew!” In the morning, court-martial number five had been ordered started, with the drearily familiar set of charges against Uriah: “Conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, using provoking and reproachful words, offering to waive rank and fight a duel with Lieutenant Frank Ellery, and, in the presence and hearing of many of the officers of the *Cyane*, inviting William A. Spencer to fight a duel.”

Once more the findings were against Uriah, with the curiously worded verdict that he was “Guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer, *but not of a gentleman.*” The sentence was humiliating. He was to be reprimanded “publically on the quarter deck of every vessel of the Navy in commission, and at every Navy Yard in the United States.” Uriah retaliated by bringing a counter-suit against William Spencer—and won, with the result that Spencer was suspended from the Navy for a year for “insulting and unofficer-like and ungentlemanly expressions and gestures against the said Uriah P. Levy.”

Uriah may have felt himself vindicated. But this action did nothing to endear him in the eyes of his fellow officers. To bring a superior officer to court was something that was not done. At the Philadelphia Navy Yard, Uriah Levy was put “in Coventry”—ostracized and ignored by everyone. Restless and bitter, Uriah applied for a six-month leave of absence. The request was quickly granted and, in granting it, his commanding officer said to Uriah with a little smile, “We would be happy to extend your leave indefinitely.”

When his words had sunk in, Uriah said, “It’s because I’m a Jew, isn’t it, sir?”

“Yes, Levy,” the officer said—he did not use “Lieutenant,” or even “Mr.” “It is.”

He had been asked to leave the club. In his long battle with the Navy Establishment, he seemed to have lost the final round.

* Uriah Levy's style of speech, which sounds a little pompous, is, we must remember, the speaker's recollection—and reconstruction—of it years later, when he could devote himself to his memoirs. He may not have spoken in precisely these words, but doubtless they express his true sentiments at the time.

* The phrase “For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge”—abbreviated with the letters “F.U.C.K.” in ships' logbooks, next to records of punishments—thus contributed a vivid four-letter word to the English language.

THE NEW JEWS VERSUS THE OLD

There may have been some in the American Jewish community who approved of Uriah Phillips Levy's well-publicized squabbles with the Navy, and the focus he had managed to bring to bear on the fact of anti-Semitism in the New World. But most did not approve, and felt that Levy's behavior had done the Jews more harm than good. As it is with any problem, it had been easier for Jews to pretend that it did not exist. The Jewish community was still small, and news and opinions within it traveled rapidly. Some of Levy's contemporaries praised him for his insistence on Old Testament justice to the bitter end. To the younger generation, however, he was merely old-fashioned and excessively "stiff-necked." Uriah Phillips Levy had, among his other accomplishments, helped define the split between "old Jews" and "new Jews."

The split was more than generational. The prejudice of the old against the new was also directed at newer immigrants, who were now being looked on as troublemakers. There was nothing new about this particular form of *Jewish* anti-Semitism. Jews have always resented, and looked askance at, Jewish newcomers. "A few of us," to the world's scattered Jewish communities, has always seemed just about enough. In Philadelphia, for example, as early as the 1760's, the Jewish congregation had swelled to such a size, from eager immigrants, that it was considered in "grave danger." Jews rolled their eyes and muttered dark thoughts about an "infestation of Jews" from other lands. Mathias Bush was a partner of David Franks in the candle business, and both men were immigrants to Philadelphia. Yet when Franks traveled to London on business in 1769, he

received a letter from Bush bemoaning that “These New Jews are a plague,” and beseeching his partner, “Pray prevent what is in your power to hinder any more of that sort to come.” Mr. Bush clearly considered himself an Old Jew. He had come to America exactly twenty-five years earlier. And the scale of his alarm can be judged by noting that, at the time of the “infestation,” there were no more than thirty Jewish families in Philadelphia.

Quite naturally the newcomers resented the snobbery of the older group—and its prosperity—and so the battle lines were drawn. At one point the squabble in Philadelphia grew to such proportions that families of the refractory new migration held separate services during the high holy days. At the same time, it was charged that the more recent arrivals were not being properly loyal to their faith, and it was certainly true that the newcomers—hungrier, more eager to get on with the business of earning livelihoods for themselves—had less time to spend on piety.

Older families of Philadelphia looked with disapproval at newer Jewish communities springing up in other cities. New Orleans was getting a particularly bad reputation for religious laxity. Why was it, for example, that New Orleans’ Jews were having to come, hat in hand, begging for funds to build a synagogue, to the Jewish communities of Philadelphia, New York, and Newport? Why weren’t wealthy New Orleans businessmen such as Jacob Hart and Judah Touro—both of whom were sons of great Jewish leaders—willing to contribute money to this cause, and why were they giving instead to Christian philanthropies?

The newer immigrants were poor, they needed baths, they worked as foot peddlers, they spoke with accents. They lacked the social status that the Jewish first families had achieved, the breeding, the education, yet they called themselves brethren. They judged a man by the success of his enterprises rather than by his “engagements with God,” as pious people such as Rebecca Gratz would have preferred, yet they called themselves Jews. They were an embarrassment. By the early 1800’s, they were threatening to fling the fabric of Jewish society in America apart, threatening the “tribal” feeling that is at the heart of all feelings of Jewishness.

But the real trouble was that most of the “new Jews” were Ashkenazic Jews, from central Europe. They could not trace their ancestry back to

Spain and Portugal. The Sephardim pointed out that the Ashkenazim used a different ritual, and they did—somewhat. The pronunciation of Hebrew was slightly different. The Sephardim spoke with a Mediterranean inflection, the accent often falling on the last syllable. (The Sephardim say Yom Kippur, for example, not Yom *Kippur*, as the Ashkenazim do.) Sephardic ritual also included some Spanish prayers, and Sephardic music—bearing traces of ancient Spanish folk music, reminiscent of flamenco—was distinctive. These differences, which may seem very slight, began to loom as all-important in the 1800’s.

The Ashkenazim spoke “heavy, ugly” languages such as German, and an “abominable garble of German and Hebrew” called Yiddish, instead of “musical, lyrical” Spanish and Portuguese. They even looked different, and it was pointed out that German Jews had large, awkward-looking noses, and lacked the elegant refinement of the highly bred, heart-shaped, olive-skinned Spanish face. But the greatest difference of all, of course, was that the Ashkenazim came from countries where to be a Jew was a disgrace. The Sephardim descended from lands where, for a while at least, to be a Jew had been to be a knight in shining armor, a duke or duchess, the king’s physician—the proudest thing a man could be. From the beginning, the two groups were like oil and water.

In 1790, a Savannah gentleman named De Leon Norden, of Sephardic stock, had written in his will that “None of the Sheftalls need be present” at his funeral. The Sheftalls were German. Even before that—in 1763, across the sea in France—the Spanish and Portuguese Jews of Bordeaux had succeeded in persuading the king to sign an edict expelling all German and Avignonese Jews from Bordeaux. In America, many of the new arrivals had names containing combinations of the word “schine” or “schien,” and so the label “sheeny” was attached to them—an epithet of Sephardic origin. The word was picked up and used generally in the press, and when a fight broke out right in the synagogue in Montreal—with top-hatted gentlemen having at each other with walking sticks and furniture—between old and new Jews, a Montreal newspaper headlined an account of the battle with the words “*Bad Sheenies!*”

Three things were happening, all interconnected, and all at the same time. The Ashkenazim were beginning to outnumber the older Sephardim, and it was only a matter of time before majority rule would mean that Ashkenazic

ritual would have to prevail in synagogues in most American cities—while the Sephardim who insisted on retaining the old would withdraw into their own tight groups, with doors closed to the Germans. Also the first stirrings of the Reform movement were being felt in the land. Reform—with rebuke for existing forms inherent in the very word—was by its nature incompatible with traditional Sephardic orthodoxy. Reform, an attempt to bring Judaism “up to date,” to make Judaism appear to be at home with existing American religious patterns, was attacked by traditionalists as a subversive attempt to “Christianize” Judaism. Under Reform, women would come down from their secluded balconies in synagogues, and worship side by side with their husbands. Men would take off their tall silk hats. Synagogues would look more like churches. English would replace Hebrew.

And while all this was happening, the oldest Jewish families were watching with dismay as their children and grandchildren seemed to be slipping away from the faith. It is an ironic fact that the heirs and assigns of men and women who had made such an arduous journey to America in order to preserve their faith should have begun to abandon it once they were here. But that was happening. Grandchildren of old Sephardic families had begun, by the early 1800’s, to marry into the Ashkenazic group, but some of them were doing something even worse than that. They were marrying Christians, and converting to Christianity.

The granddaughter of a wealthy Jewish businessman was suing to break her grandfather’s will, which provided that she could not partake of a large family trust if she married a non-Jew. She wanted her share of her grandfather’s money, none of the clumsy entanglements of his religion, and her Christian fiancé. It might have happened yesterday in Manhattan. It happened in Charleston in 1820. She won her case.

And was something else happening to the Sephardim? Were the long inbred centuries exacting a quirky genetic toll? Certainly, by the nineteenth century, eccentrics were no rarity among the Old Guard, and few families were without their “strange” members. More and more, moving down the laddered generations in Malcolm Stern’s huge book, the notation “Insane” appears next to various names, as does the comment “Unmarried.” Spinster aunts and bachelor uncles were becoming the rule now, rather than the

exception. The families, once so prolific, seemed on the verge of becoming extinct.

THE U.S. NAVY SURRENDERS AT LAST!

Uriah P. Levy, in the meantime, had been continuing with his crusade to have Jews treated as the equals of Christians. He had gone on with his lecturing and scolding of fellow Jews who took insults lying down, who responded to slurs by turning the other cheek. He was a frequent writer of peppery letters to the editor, and was otherwise securing his reputation as a firebrand. He had also decided—since he no longer had Navy duties to occupy him—that it was time for him to make some money.

New York in the early nineteenth century had become a more important seaport than either Newport or Philadelphia. The completion of the Erie Canal, “linking East to West,” in 1825, secured New York’s position as the maritime—hence commercial, and hence money—capital of the United States. In that year alone, five hundred new businesses were started in the city, and twelve banks and thirteen marine insurance companies opened their doors. The population topped 150,000, and—an unheard-of thing in America—one of the city newspapers announced that it would publish on Sundays. The Park Theatre declared that it would present grand opera, and number 7 Cherry Street became the first private house in America to be lit by gas.

Maiden Lane, four blocks north of Wall Street, had been the division between the commercial and residential sections of the city. South of Maiden Lane, the city was abustle with business; to the north lay houses with gardens, estates, and farms. Greenwich Village had been a separate

village, approached by crossing a stone bridge at Canal Street, but, by 1825, the commercial part of the city had encroached so far north that it was pointed out that no more than “the width of one block” separated the city from the suburban Village, and the most daring of the speculators prophesied that Broadway would one day extend as far north as Tenth Street. Today, of course, it continues on through the length of Manhattan, through the Bronx, Yonkers, and into Tarrytown. Washington Square, at the northern edge of Greenwich Village, had been the city’s potter’s field until 1823, when its development into a park was begun and the tall red-brick mansions were built on its perimeter. This helped establish Fifth Avenue—which sprouted from the northern side of the park—as the fashionable residential address it was to become. When Washington Square Park was completed in 1827, it was felt that the city would never reasonably be expected to grow north of Fourteenth Street. Within a year or so, even a Fourteenth Street boundary seemed too constricting. It did not take especial real estate shrewdness to see that Manhattan island, shaped like an elongated footprint and growing upward from the toe, had no way to expand except to the north. It was in this northern real estate that Uriah Levy decided to invest his Navy savings. He bought, in 1828, three rooming houses, two on Duane Street and one on Greenwich Street.

It was quickly clear that his unofficial discharge from Navy duty had put him in the right place at the right time. Within a few months, he was able to sell one of his Duane Street houses for nearly twice what he had paid for it. He bought more real estate, sold it, and bought more, parlaying each deal into something bigger than the last. Such was the booming state of Manhattan real estate that, within just four years, Uriah Levy was a rich man. He began to cut a considerable figure in New York’s fledgling society—which had never been the “set thing” it had been in Philadelphia—and was able to afford to turn his affairs over to a staff of assistants and to take off for Europe, where he acquired, among other things, a Savile Row tailor and “a broadcloth frock coat with velvet collar; white satin stock shaped with whalebone; pantaloons of wool and silk jersey; two linen suits; white pleated shirts with gold buttons; light colored fawn gloves, a walking stick with ivory knob,” according to his tailor’s bill.

Rich almost overnight, still a bachelor—and, it began to seem, a confirmed one—Uriah was now able to indulge himself in personal whims

and fancies, and, after his rejection from the Navy, this must have given him a certain amount of personal satisfaction. One of his enthusiasms was Thomas Jefferson, whom he regarded as “one of the greatest men in history. . . . He did much to mold our Republic in a form in which a man’s *religion* does not make him ineligible for political or governmental life.” In the summer of 1833, he conceived the idea of personally commissioning a statue of Jefferson and presenting it to the United States government. It was a totally new concept. Individuals had never before given statues of American heroes to the public. Perhaps Uriah felt that by celebrating Jefferson—the champion of tolerance—in this public way he could get back at the United States Navy for its snubs. In any case, in Paris Uriah gave the assignment to Pierre Jean David d’Angers, considered one of the greatest sculptors of his day, who used a Sully portrait of Jefferson, which Uriah borrowed from General Lafayette, as a likeness. It took d’Angers nearly a year to complete the sculpture, a massive bronze which depicts Jefferson standing astride two books, a quill pen poised in his right hand and, in his left, a scroll on which the Declaration of Independence is inscribed in its entirety. Uriah arranged for the statue’s shipment to Washington, and wrote a formal letter of presentation to Congress.

In its customary fashion, Congress did a certain amount of hemming and hawing over the unusual gift, and there was a good deal of debate over whether it should be accepted or not. What sort of “precedent” would be set by accepting a gift like this? Congress wondered. And from an expected quarter—the Navy Department—came disgruntled noises to the effect that it was “presumptuous” for a “mere lieutenant” to present a statue of a great President. Once more, Uriah was being called pushy and overassertive. But at last, when Representative Amos Lane of Indiana said bluntly that he saw no reason why the statue should be turned down simply “because it had been presented by a lieutenant instead of a commander,” the Congress seemed to recognize the silliness of its behavior, and the Jefferson statue was accepted by a substantial majority. It was placed in the Capitol Rotunda. Several years later, it was moved to the north front lawn of the White House, where it stood for thirty years. Then it was returned to the Capitol, where it presently stands, to the right of Washington’s statue, the only statue in the Rotunda ever donated by a private citizen.*

Uriah Levy may, in a way, have begun to identify himself with his hero at this point in his life. Like Jefferson, Uriah possessed a certain genius and had experienced command. But now the great moments of his life must have seemed past. Like Uriah, Jefferson had been rich, but, Uriah may have remembered, he died penniless and heavily in debt. Uriah's thoughts turned next to Monticello, the extraordinary manor house Jefferson had designed and built for himself on a mountaintop near Charlottesville, Virginia.

When Jefferson died, Monticello went to his daughter, Martha Jefferson Randolph, along with 409 acres, all that remained of what had been a 10,000-acre estate. By 1828, she could no longer afford to run the great house, and she advertised it for sale at \$71,000. But Monticello proved itself something of a white elephant. In design, it was revolutionary for its day, built like a temple and lopped with a huge octagonal tower and dome. Guests had complained that for all the aesthetic pleasure the place provided, it was not really comfortable. Inside, it contained innovative oddities. There were no bedrooms in the conventional sense. Sleepers used platforms in curtained-off cubicles. In 1830, Mrs. Randolph's asking price had dropped to \$11,000. A year later, she announced she would accept \$7,000. At that price, Monticello was bought by a Charlottesville man named James Barclay, an eccentric who cared nothing about Thomas Jefferson's house; the house did not figure in his plans at all. Barclay had a grandiose scheme to plant the mountaintop with mulberry trees and grow silkworms, in order to corner the world's silk market. By the time Uriah Levy made what he described as a "pilgrimage" to Monticello in 1836, the silkworm program had been abandoned. The house, left empty, had been attacked by vandals and the weather. Uriah rode on horseback up a rutted roadway that had once been a gracious drive and found the house almost in a state of ruin. He bought the house and land for \$2,700, from a grateful Barclay.

Because he did indeed get Monticello at a bargain price, and because he was regarded somewhat coolly by his new neighbors—who resented him more for being a Yankee than a Jew—rumors began, in Charlottesville, about Uriah's obtaining Monticello through some sort of chicanery, and these stories persisted and have been perpetuated in history texts. In one tale, Uriah, having learned that a wealthy Bostonian had decided to buy Monticello for a considerably higher figure, hurried to Charlottesville and put in his low bid before the Bostonian's bid arrived by mail. Another story,

even more unlikely, is that Uriah—who never drank—engaged a prospective buyer (from Philadelphia) in “a drinking bout,” and then bought Monticello while the Philadelphian was recovering from a hangover. None of these stories is remotely true, and the purchase was carried out in a perfectly straightforward and orderly manner. Uriah immediately began a long and costly program of renovation and restoration, paying particular attention to the cherry and walnut parquet floors, the room that Jefferson had used for his study, the area he had used as a sleeping room, and the place where President Madison had slept. He tried to recover, wherever he could, Monticello’s original furnishings, most of which had been sold and scattered about the country, and he hired gardeners to restore the grounds in accordance with the elaborate plans drawn up by Jefferson. In 1837, Uriah bought 960 adjoining acres to protect the property, and a few months later he added 1,542 acres more. In the middle of this happy—if at times lonely—activity, a surprising thing happened. Suddenly, in a commission signed by President Andrew Jackson, Uriah learned that he had been promoted—after twenty years as a lieutenant—to the rank of commander. All at once things were looking up again.

Though Uriah certainly didn’t need the Navy pay, he immediately applied for sea duty and—again—was delighted and surprised to receive orders assigning him to proceed “with as little delay as possible” to Pensacola, Florida, where he was to report to the war sloop *Vandalia* as its commanding officer. When he arrived in Pensacola, however, and went aboard the *Vandalia*, he must have wondered whether his old enemies in the Navy Establishment weren’t after him again and giving him this assignment as a cruel joke. The *Vandalia* was barely afloat. Her hull was rotting, her decks were collapsing, and her guns and metalwork were thick with rust. Her rats had not yet left her, though, and were in evidence everywhere. The *Vandalia*’s crew was, if anything, in even sorrier shape. It seemed to be composed of the ragtag and bobtail of the Navy—drunkards, thieves, and misfits of every variety. The incorrigibles of every command seemed to have filtered, at last, down to the *Vandalia*. When Uriah came aboard, only one junior officer bothered to salute him. A number of the crew were missing and, after a tour of Pensacola taverns had rounded up most of them—protesting that they saw no reason why they should not be permitted to drink during duty hours—many were in such an alcoholic state that they

had to be lashed into hammocks on the deck. But Uriah was unfazed. With his customary self-assurance, he wrote to his mother that: “I am certainly one of the most capable of putting the corvette in seaworthy condition.” On September 7, 1838, he set about refurbishing his ship. By February the following year she was ready to sail.

As the *Vandalia* moved out of the harbor into the Gulf of Mexico, there was a certain amount of comment on shore as a decorative detail of Uriah was noticed. He had whimsically ordered the *Vandalia*'s guns painted a bright blue. It was his way of giving the ship his personal stamp. It was also very un-Navy. It was, again, his insistence on being his own man, stating his own terms.

The *Vandalia*'s mission was to call on various Mexican ports along the Gulf Coast and to offer support—moral or, if needed, physical—to American consuls who were the butts of waves of anti-American feeling during a period of revolutionary upheaval. In one port after another, the appearance of the now snappy *Vandalia* with her sparkling bright blue guns was enough to quell Mexican tempers and reassure United States consulates. And Uriah, in full-dress uniform, clearly relished being rowed ashore to be escorted to consular dinner parties, where he inevitably was first to raise a toast “To the flag!”

On board his ship, too, he was held in a curious kind of awe. The first day out he announced that he was making a few innovations in regard to disciplinary measures. There would, for example, be no floggings carried out on his ship while he was in command of it. To his junior officers, this was an astounding announcement. How could discipline possibly be carried out, they wanted to know, without the threat of the cat, particularly with a crew that contained the dregs of the naval service? One officer, Lieutenant Hooe, asked Uriah whether he had lost his reason. Flogging was a Navy tradition. To promise that there would be no flogging was an open invitation to mutiny. But Uriah was firm.

On the third night out, one of the most regular offenders in the crew, who had smuggled whiskey aboard, fell over the railing in a drunken stupor and was lost, which left the *Vandalia* in slightly better shape. But the men who remained were better behaved only in a matter of degree. Drunkenness and petty thievery were diseases endemic to the Navy, and Uriah devised unique punishments for these offenses. A man found guilty of stealing would have

hung from his neck a wooden sign painted with the word THIEF. A sailor found drunk on duty would wear a sign, cut in the shape of a bottle, marked A DRUNKARD'S PUNISHMENT. Lieutenant Hooe pronounced these measures not only futile but ridiculous. But after a few weeks at sea, an odd fact had to be admitted: they seemed to be working.

Uriah's theory was that to make a man look absurd in the eyes of his companions had a much more lasting effect on his behavior than to torture him physically. And he was an early endorser of the notion that a punishment ought to fit the crime. Sometimes this required him to exercise an unusual amount of imagination. One day, for example, a young sailor named John Thompson was brought to Uriah and accused of mocking—by imitating his voice—an officer. Uriah considered the charge, and then, to a mystified crew member, ordered that a few handfuls of seagulls' feathers be collected. When the feathers arrived, Uriah ordered Thompson to drop his trousers. A small dab of tar was applied to each buttock, and the feathers were then affixed to the tar. The young man was told to stand on deck in this condition for five minutes, to the great amusement of the crew. "If you are going to act like a parrot, you should look like one," Uriah said.

When he returned to Pensacola, Uriah fully expected to be sent out on another assignment with the *Vandalia*. But, without warning, he was ordered relieved of his command and to "await orders." Another long period in professional limbo began. He wrote to Washington asking for assignments, but the Navy remained mute. At last, discouraged, he returned to Monticello and the real estate business.

The Panic of 1837 had left the real estate market severely depressed, and Uriah, whose fortune had not been affected by the Panic, took this opportunity to invest heavily in more Manhattan properties. Soon he owned at least twenty buildings. Three of his rooming houses earned him an income of nearly \$3,500 a month, at a time when the average American working man earned \$600 a year. Still, he continued half hopefully to think of the sea, and another command. And so it can be imagined with what kind of shock he received, nearly two years after leaving the *Vandalia*, a tersely worded notice from Washington ordering him to appear before a court-martial for "forgery, cowardice, and cruel and scandalous conduct." His sixth.

His accuser, it seemed, was his former fellow officer Lieutenant Hooe, who, in the months since Uriah had left the *Vandalia*, had been conducting a private vendetta to bring Uriah to his knees. The specific details of the charges were almost quaint. “Forgery” referred to the fact that a report submitted by Uriah had omitted two words, through a clerical error. “Cowardice,” the charges stated, meant that Uriah Levy had once allowed a man “to wring his nose severely without making any resistance.” The “cruel and scandalous conduct” referred to the punishment of John Thompson, and, for good measure, Uriah was also accused of having “failed to set an example of decency and propriety in his own personal conduct,” which was a long way of saying that he had had the temerity to paint his ship’s guns blue. On the surface, the charges appeared to be by far the most serious Uriah had ever faced. Examined closely, on the other hand, they seemed ridiculous—and Uriah may have made a tactical error at the outset of his trial by telling the court that he considered them so.

Seldom in American history have a sailor’s buttocks received so much and such intensive scrutiny from men in the highest ranks of government, including the man with the highest rank of all, the President. The prosecution accused the *Vandalia*’s master of having ordered a full-scale tarring and feathering. The defense insisted that a dab of tar “no larger than a silver dollar” had been applied to each member in question. The youth, the prosecution claimed, had been permanently traumatized from the humiliating treatment he had received before the eyes of his mates. Nonsense, replied the defense; the incident had been treated as a good joke and the morale of his ship had improved considerably as a result of it. Page after page of testimony went into the court transcript over the condition of the posterior of a young man who—because he was off on the high seas somewhere—could not be called to testify. As the case dragged on, Uriah became increasingly confident that he would be exonerated. It was a blow of stunning proportions when he heard the court pronounce him guilty, and then heard the sentence—that he was to be dismissed from the United States Navy. It was his second dismissal. He returned to New York in a state of shock.

President John Tyler had been a lawyer before assuming the Presidency, and he looked over courts-martial, when they were sent to him for the customary review, with particular care. It must have seemed to him quite

clear that something other than his mode of punishment was “wrong” with Captain Levy where the Navy higher-ups were concerned. Though he did not touch on this in his opinion—anti-Semitism was still such an elusive, vague, ill-defined quantity in the United States—Tyler did say that he considered the punishment excessive, and asked the court to reconsider its sentence.

In its reconsideration, the court became very excited and wrote a shrilly worded reply to Tyler, saying: “We cannot imagine any punishment more degrading and more calculated to produce such feelings than that which was inflicted [on Seaman Thompson]. It involved not only the indecent exposure of the person of the boy at the gangway of the ship, but the ignominy which are attached to only the most disgraceful of offenses. In this view the punishment was not only unusual but unlawful and exceedingly cruel.” Even flogging would have been more merciful. Please, the court begged the President, let Uriah’s sentence stand, for the sake of “Navy tradition” if for nothing else.

The President’s reply was firm. “A small quantity of tar,” he wrote, “was placed on the back”—“back” was a suitably Presidential euphemism—“of the boy and a half dozen parrot’s feathers put on it was substituted in place of twelve stripes of the cat. And for this Capt. Levy is sentenced to be dismissed from the Service.... He meant to affix temporarily to the boy a badge of disgrace, in order to correct a bad habit, and to teach him and others that the habit of mimicry is that of the parrot whose feathers he wore. The badge was worn only for a few minutes. No harm was done to the person, no blood made to flow, as from the application of the cat. And no cruelty was exercised, unless the reasoning of the court be that this badge of disgrace was more cruel than corporal punishment.... I therefore mitigate the sentence of Capt. Levy from dismissal from the Service to suspension without pay for the period of 12 months.” Once again, Uriah had been saved by having the right man in the White House.

And President Tyler, a just and kindly man, further mitigated Uriah’s twelve-month suspension a few months later by promoting him from commander to captain.

But the twelve months passed, and Uriah’s official status continued to be “unassigned.” Apparently the Navy did not want his services, despite his new rank. Uriah, growing still richer, busied himself in real estate, bustling

back and forth between his house in New York and Monticello, and whenever he had a moment, he dashed off a polite note to the Navy Department, asking for an assignment. His requests were always “noted.” The Navy would let him know if anything came up. Uriah also, in this period, took up another form of writing—letters to editors of newspapers in New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, on the United States Navy’s “antiquated,” “barbarous,” and “medieval” use of flogging as punishment. Uriah Levy loved to indulge in bombast, and these letters show him at his grandiloquent best. “America shall not be scourged!” he cried. Soon he was taking to the lecture platform with his crusade, and his vivid descriptions of men being lashed held audiences in shocked fascination.

He was, of course, alternately beseeching the Navy for assignments and attacking one of the Navy’s most sacred institutions in the press and on the dais. His editorial letters, which were presently being published in pamphlet form, were drawing reactions from the Congress. Speeches, quoting Uriah, were being delivered on the floor of the House, and both pro- and anti-flogging factions were developing. Senator John P. Hale of New Hampshire took up Uriah’s cause with particular enthusiasm, and soon he had become Congress’ chief opponent of the lash. The Navy, becoming even more deeply entrenched in its position, announced that “it would be utterly impracticable to have an efficient Navy without this form of punishment.” Meanwhile, Uriah’s replies from the Navy brass grew chillier and chillier in tone. The months stretched into years, the years to a decade. In September, 1850, Senator Hale succeeded in attaching an anti-flogging rider to the Naval Appropriations Bill. Two years later, further laws were passed, and Uriah was being called “the father of the abolition of flogging,” though he shares this honor with Senator Hale. It was now twelve years since he had left the *Vandalia*. Now, when he wrote to the Navy, his letters were sometimes not even acknowledged. He was growing old, but he had not in any way tired of the fight.

In the autumn of 1853, Uriah Levy did a thing that startled his friends and neighbors. He married a young woman named Virginia Lopez. Uriah was sixty-one. She was eighteen. She wasn’t just young. She was his niece, the daughter of his sister Fanny, who had married a West Indian banker named Abraham Lopez—a cousin, in turn, of the Lopezes of Newport, the Gomezes, and a number of other Levys. Uriah and his new wife were

related, it was once figured out by the family, at least fourteen different ways. Later in the nineteenth century laws were passed—and have since been abolished—banning such consanguineous marriages, but in 1853 it was all quite legal. And Uriah pointed out that he was really marrying Virginia to “protect” her. Her father, who had at one point been quite rich in Jamaica, had made some unwise loans and investments, and had died leaving his wife and daughter almost penniless. It is part of Jewish tradition for the closest unmarried male relative to marry and care for a widowed or orphaned female member of the family. Nonetheless, eyebrows were raised.

In 1855, Congress approved an “Act to Promote the Efficiency of the Navy.” Among other provisions, the act set up a board of officers to examine Navy personnel “who, in the judgment of the board, shall be incapable of performing promptly and efficiently all their duty both ashore and afloat.” Uriah had no reason to suppose that the act was aimed specifically at him and a few other jostlers of the official Navy applecart—but it was. Within a few months of the passage of the act, Uriah was notified that he was among those adjudged incapable of further service, and that he was therefore “stricken from the rolls” of the United States Navy. The implications of this terse note were even more insulting. The act specified that officers who had achieved their incapacity because of ill health or old age should merely be placed on the reserve list. Those “stricken from the rolls” were those who were “themselves to blame for their incompetency.” The final, most cutting touch of all was that the letter was addressed “Mr. Uriah P. Levy, Late Captain, U.S. Navy.”

Uriah was outraged. Sixteen years had passed since he had left the *Vandalia*, and he was now sixty-three, with a young and beautiful wife, a fortune, and two splendid houses—at Saint Mark’s Place in New York, and Monticello. His chances of reversing the board’s decision looked almost hopeless, and would involve virtually another act of Congress. But Uriah, ever the warrior, girded himself for the grandest and mightiest battle of his career.

He rode to New York and hired Benjamin Butler as his attorney. Butler was one of the most distinguished lawyers in the country. He had been Martin Van Buren’s law partner and, when Van Buren became President, had been named secretary of war. He had also served as attorney general under Andrew Jackson. Together, the two men sat down to prepare a

petition to Congress which declared that the Navy's action was "outrageous, unauthorized, illegal, and without precedent," and that Uriah had been "unjustly dealt with, and was entitled to reinstatement in the Navy and compensated for the illegal and cruel treatment he had received."

In many ways the naval review board that had dismissed Uriah was reminiscent of the Inquisitional courts of Spain centuries earlier, which had sent Uriah's ancestors from the country. The board had conducted its proceedings in total secrecy. No witnesses had been heard, no evidence had been presented. The accused had not been permitted to say anything in his own defense, nor had he had anyone to represent him. Butler reminded the Congress of this in his petition.

He pointed out that the board had vastly overstepped the authority given it. It had been authorized to conduct "a careful examination into the efficiency" of officers, and to submit "the names and rank of all officers who, in their judgment, shall be incapable of performing promptly and efficiently all their duty ... and when they believe that such inefficiency has arisen from any cause implying sufficient blame on the part of any officer to justify it, they are to recommend that he be stricken from the rolls." This meant, Butler argued, that unless an officer could be proved "incapable of performing" duties, the Navy board had no business reaching a judgment about him. And how had Uriah's capabilities been tested? Not at all. Despite repeated attempts to return to service, where he might have been tested, he had been repeatedly turned down. The petition was also boldly critical of President Pierce for approving the board's action, and said: "In so far as the President may have been led to a general acceptance of the report ... by the unsound and fallacious arguments of his cabinet adviser, he has been misguided." The objections to Uriah Levy on the Navy's part, Butler's petition stated flatly, were three: he had not risen through the ranks in the traditional way; he was outspokenly opposed to the tradition of corporal punishment; and he was a Jew. It was the first time in American history that anti-Semitism had been publicly identified as a force in American life and government. The Butler-drafted petition for Levy ran to more than nine thousand words.

Congress was no less slow-footed in 1855 than it is today, and not until a year after the petition was formally submitted did Congress pass a bill which provided that officers, such as Uriah, who had been cashiered could

have their cases presented before a board of inquiry. It was an initial victory for Uriah, and now began the long and tedious process of scheduling the hearing—for the following fall—and of gathering evidence and witnesses to a career which, after all, had been cut off seventeen years before. Uriah was sixty-four now, and must have wondered at moments whether it was worth it. But the fire was still in him, and he was determined to end his life proudly, as a Jew and as a United States naval officer. He was driven by a kind of stubborn patriotism, an unwavering faith in the guarantees and freedoms stated in the Constitution, and he seems to have felt that his fight was not for his vindication but that America and all Americans somehow needed to be exonerated, acquitted, declared guiltless of what had happened within its armed services.

He, and his attorney, Mr. Butler, also had a high sense of showmanship, and were determined, in the process of seeking justice and redress, to give Washington, the press, and the public a performance they would not soon forget. When the Levy party arrived in Washington for the hearing in November, 1857, it installed itself in a series of suites in Gadsby's Hotel, and when ready to depart for the Navy building, the party chose a route that took them down Pennsylvania Avenue, past the White House, where Uriah could dramatically point out his monumental statue of Thomas Jefferson as it stood, snow-covered, on the White House lawn. The party—including Uriah, Butler, his aides, and Mrs. Levy—entered the hearing room processionally, and took their seats.

As Butler had warned Uriah, the prosecution opened with an attempt to introduce Uriah's six courts-martial into the record. Butler quickly objected, saying that these courts-martial had been held concerning certain specific actions in the past which were not relevant to the hearing, since those acts were not being questioned. He was overruled. Butler then moved that, if the courts-martial were entered as evidence, the fairness and merit of each decision should be taken up, and evidence heard—a process that would have taken months. Once more he was overruled.

When the findings of all the courts-martial had been read into the record—which took several days—the Navy then unleashed its major attack against Uriah. One after another the prosecution brought forth a long string of officers to testify as to Uriah Levy's incompetence, his unreliability, and his general undesirability. One officer said that Uriah was “generally

disliked.” Another testified that “His reputation is low.” Commodore Matthew Perry commented that there was “nothing particularly remarkable about him except that he was rather impulsive and eccentric in his manners, fond of speaking of himself and his professional requirements.” Commodore Silas Stringham said: “He is very vain, and his manner of interfering when two or three persons were talking together was disagreeable.” The charges were vague and ill-defined, and since so much time had passed since Uriah’s last command the witnesses had a good deal of trouble with dates, one officer insisting he had worked with Uriah for four years, though the two had known each other only during his service on the *Vandalia*, a period of two years. One officer, who admitted he did not know Uriah at all, said that he felt instinctively that Uriah was a poor sort. “I feel he is unfit for the proper performance of the duties of a Captain,” he said.

Now it was the defense’s turn. Benjamin Butler had lined up no less than thirteen officers on active duty in the Navy to testify in Uriah’s behalf, plus six ex-Navy officers. Three others sent in written depositions. These witnesses were led by Uriah’s old friend Senior Commodore Charles Stewart, chief of the Philadelphia Navy Yard, who testified that “When Captain Levy served under me, he performed his professional duties to my perfect satisfaction. I thought he was competent in 1818 and I think he is competent now. I’d be glad to have him on my ship under my command.” The others were similarly laudatory, and witness after witness made the point that at the heart of all Uriah’s troubles lay anti-Semitism.

When the nineteen witnesses had testified, and the depositions had been read, the court clearly expected the defense to rest its case. But Mr. Butler had saved a special surprise for the end. What happened next was a spectacle on an epic scale such as those devised, a century later, by Cecil B. De Mille. The courtroom doors opened, and in filed a stream of character witnesses composed of some of the most distinguished men in America, from every field and profession, all prepared to testify to the probity and uprightness and courage of Uriah Levy. They included bank presidents, merchants, doctors, commissioners, the editor of the *New York Globe* and the governor of New Jersey. Uriah’s distant cousin, Henry Hendricks, was there, and Senator Dix and Congressman Aaron Vanderpoel and Nathan Ely, president of the Peter Cooper Fire Insurance Company, and James H.

Blake, the former mayor of Washington. Jews and Christians, heads of companies and famous lawyers, one after another they mounted the witness stand to speak out for Uriah Levy. In all, fifty-three more witnesses gave testimony, bringing the grand total of defense witnesses to seventy-five. It was an overwhelming performance that might have begun to seem comic if it had not been for the distinction and the obvious sincerity of the men involved. And it was of course a grandstand play, for as each new day in court began, with new witnesses called, the American press and public attention became increasingly riveted on what was going on in a tiny Washington courtroom before a relatively unnewsworthy Navy court of inquiry. Americans who had never heard of Uriah Levy, or of such a thing as anti-Semitism, now were aroused, and sides were taken. For weeks, as the trial marched on, it seemed as though the newspapers could write, and Americans could talk, of nothing else.

Seventy-five witnesses were a difficult act to follow, but of course one voice remained to be heard to close the show: Uriah's. He had reached his finest hour. On December 19, 1857, at ten in the morning—the trial had now gone on for more than a month—Uriah rose to his feet and began: “My parents were Israelites, and I was nurtured in the faith of my ancestors....” Three days later, on December 22, he concluded with the words: “What is my case today, if you yield to this injustice, may tomorrow be that of the Roman Catholic or the Unitarian, the Episcopalian or the Methodist, the Presbyterian or the Baptist. There is but one safeguard, and this is to be found in an honest, wholehearted, inflexible support of the wise, the just, the impartial guarantee of the Constitution. I have the fullest confidence that you will faithfully adhere to this guarantee, and, therefore, with like confidence, I leave my destiny in your hands.” The members of the board looked stunned and glassy-eyed. Uriah sat down to what a reporter called “a spontaneous outburst of heartfelt applause.”

“It was,” commented a Washington newspaper, “one of the most glorious, if not brilliant, pleas ever made in the history of the United States Navy: a plea that ‘right should be done!’ This became the crowning triumph in Uriah Levy’s career: it was a half-century of experience speaking, experience as a seaman, but most important of all, experience as an American Jew.”

The court's verdict was unanimous: "Levy is morally, mentally, physically and professionally fit for the Naval Service and ... ought to be restored to the active list of the Navy."

Now that the secret was out, that anti-Semitism afflicted America, too, as it had done for centuries in reactionary Europe, and lay there for all to see—live, quivering, and unpleasant, a fact that had to be dealt with in the armed services as in civilian life—the immediate reaction was one of extreme embarrassment. Now the Navy set about, very late in the game, to atone for the way it had treated Uriah. After years of ignoring his requests to be assigned sea duty, he was, barely four months after the court of inquiry had reached its verdict, respectfully asked by the Secretary of the Navy if he would care to take command of the sloop *Macedonian*, being outfitted in Boston, and sail it to join the Mediterranean Fleet. Uriah replied gracefully that he would be honored, and then—perhaps in a spirit of wicked humor—added an outrageous request. He would like to take his wife along. She was, he explained, "an orphan, and not a native of this country, without any protection during my absence."

It was an unheard-of request. Never before in American naval history—nor since, for that matter—had a captain been permitted to carry his wife aboard. But the Secretary of the Navy, in his new mood of trying to placate Uriah Levy, replied promptly that this would certainly be possible.

Virginia Lopez Levy often seemed in need of some sort of "protection." A curious woman, with an enormous interest in herself, she wrote extensive memoirs in later years, in which she speculated at length about the secret of her immense charm and attractiveness to men. She once asked one of her many men friends, a poet named Nathaniel Parker Willis, whether he could put his finger on what made her so desirable. "I said," she wrote, "I think you know me well enough to realize that I am not a vain woman—but it would be idle and ungrateful for me to pretend that I was unaware of the kindness and attention showered on me. Will you tell me the truth, to what do you attribute this popularity I am fortunate to enjoy?"

The poet replied—according to Virginia—as follows:

You have indeed set me a hard task. You ask a mere man, an admirer and a poet, to be absolutely truthful to a young and interesting woman, but as your wish is my command, I will do my best. The beauty of a vain woman

may command the adoration of men, but it rarely inspires their love. Your power is potent because you use it so little. The infinite variety of your charm is as elusive as yourself and therefore difficult to define, but the brilliant bubbling effervescence of your youth is like a sparkling glass of champagne that you give us enough of to exhilarate without intoxicating. Do you wonder that we quaff it to the last drop?

A sculptor in Florence once asked her to pose for him and—again, according to Virginia—“He wanted me to sit for his *Allegro*. I asked how she was depicted. He said ‘buxom, blithe and debonair.’ I positively refused to pose for anyone described in this manner, as I was short and plump and possessed of *la beauté de diable*.”

She appears to have been an inveterate flirt, and there was a curious episode at Monticello, one day when Uriah was out of town, in which Virginia became involved with a number of spirited college boys who, for some reason, happened to be passing through. She girlishly ordered them off the property, but they refused to go. And after a romping chase over stone walls, through gardens, and in and out of arbors and bowers and gazebos, Virginia wrote that “We all parted friends.”

Virginia accepted full credit for the fact that her husband’s request to bring her along was granted. “The popularity I was fortunate enough to enjoy with the men in power,” she wrote, “won for me the unusual distinction of being allowed to accompany my husband. This privilege, which has never been granted since, was passed by both houses and granted without protest.”

Her “infinite variety” made her quite a handful for her aging husband. He tried to keep pace with her youthful energy, and dyed his graying hair and moustache jet black. But he also found her an expensive commodity, and whenever they quarreled it was over the extravagant amounts she spent on clothes and trimmings. And she was very nearly too much for the *Macedonian*, where the presence of a solitary female among an all-male crew was, not surprisingly, disruptive. In his diary, a junior officer wrote: “She seemed determined to show off her dresses for every time she came on deck she had a different one.” On another occasion, this same officer was disturbed to enter the captain’s cabin on an errand and to find “the tables

and chairs covered with ladies' apparel, hoops and skirts, bonnets and shoes, etc. etc."

Virginia, on the other hand, found life on shipboard most agreeable, and seemed, at times, to be going out of her way to be kind to the younger officers—particularly at times when the captain was on duty on the bridge and she was alone with time to kill in her cabin. And she enjoyed the stops at Mediterranean ports, where she mingled, as she put it, among "the exalted circles of European society." Everywhere, she wrote, she was admired. From her memoirs: "My sojourn in Italy was as enjoyable as my stay in Egypt. Particularly so in Naples, where I occupied an apartment for some time. Captain Levy was compelled to leave, but everyone was very kind to me, including our Ambassador & his wife, Mrs. Chandler... Spent Yom Kippur with Baron and Baroness Rothschild, who had a synagogue in their home. I have always admired the Rothschild family, and in whatever country I met them was impressed with their nobility of character. They understood perfectly *noblesse oblige*." She dashed off to Paris, where "I went to a fashionable modiste ... and told her I wanted a white tulle gown, as simple as she could make it, and told her I must have it in time for the ball. She was horrified. Madame must have brocade and point lace, but I insisted on the tulle, and she reluctantly agreed to make it. The night of the ball when these old duchesses adjusted their lorgnettes to look me over and pronounce me *charmante*, I thought I had made a wise selection. But neither the gown nor I had anything to recommend us but our freshness. I have never seen such a collection of jewels and ugly women in my life!"

Her favorite ball that season was the "wonderful costume ball given by the Emperor Napoleon III and where the Empress Eugenie was masked ... the splendor of its costumes, the scintillation of its lights, the rhythm and intoxication of its music, I think, went a little to my head and I felt that in order to enter into the spirit of the evening I must indulge in a violent flirtation.... I learned later that my partner was Prince Metternich...."

Virginia must have been a trial to Uriah, but there were other compensations. In February, 1860, Uriah Levy learned that he had been placed in command of the entire Mediterranean Fleet, and had been elevated to the rank of commodore, which was then the Navy's highest rank. The fleet celebrated this event by presenting him with a thirteen-gun

salute. And so Uriah Levy, scorned and beleaguered most of his life in the service, had all the luck at last.

It was all he wanted. The board of inquiry trial had taken its toll on him. He had begun to complain of “stomach distress,” and there were other signs that he was getting old. In 1861, he and Virginia came home to the big house in Saint Mark’s Place in New York. In April of that year Fort Sumter surrendered, and suddenly the Navy officer corps was split along North-South lines. War seemed inevitable, and many officers returned to the South to count themselves with the Confederacy. Uriah, though he owned property south of the Mason-Dixon Line, announced his allegiance to the Union, and even talked excitedly of Navy service in the Civil War. But early in the spring of 1862, he came down with a severe cold. It developed into pneumonia. On March 22 of that year he died in his sleep, with Virginia at his side.

Uriah’s last will and testament managed to say a good deal about his zeal as a patriot, as well as the size of his ego. One of his bequests was for the erection of a statue of himself, “of the size of life at least” and “to cost at least six thousand dollars,” above his grave, on which he wished inscribed: “Uriah P. Levy, Captain of the United States Navy, Father of the law for the abolition of the barbarous practise of corporal punishment in the Navy of the United States.” He then directed that Monticello—the house and acreage—be left “to the people of the United States,” but he attached an odd proviso. He asked that the estate be turned into “an Agricultural School for the purpose of educating as practical farmers children of the warrant office of the United States Navy whose Fathers are dead.” Was this Uriah’s idea of a joke, or a serious gesture aimed at turning swords into plowshares? Why should the children of dead warrant officers be taught farming? Perhaps Uriah, who considered himself a gentleman farmer as well as a Navy officer, felt that the two occupations complemented each other. In any case, his will left the condition unexplained. There were a number of charitable bequests, and gifts to relatives. Virginia was directed to receive the minimum that the law allowed.

Needless to say, Virginia was not happy with this state of affairs, nor were members of Uriah’s family, who had looked forward to splitting up the vast and valuable acreage at Monticello, and who might have been willing to spend less on a monument to the deceased. After Uriah died, his will was

contested and his estate went into litigation for several years. Finally the will was broken, and Monticello went to one of Uriah's nephews—appropriately named Jefferson Levy—who, with his family, maintained the big place until 1923, when a Jefferson Memorial Foundation purchased it from him for half a million dollars, a respectable gain on the \$2,700 Uriah Levy had paid for it. Virginia Levy remarried rather soon after her husband's death, thus disqualifying herself from much more than the share of the estate she already had received. She survived Uriah by an astonishing sixty-three years, and died in 1925. So it was that the widow of an officer of the War of 1812 lived well into the flapper era. She did not, however, live to see the launching of the destroyer U.S.S. *Levy* during World War II. At the height of the war, the *Levy* was described by the *New York Herald Tribune* as one of “the swift and deadly sub-killers.” It was an appropriate monument to Uriah—*more* appropriate than the life-size statue, which never came to be.

* A copy of the Jefferson statue stands in the council chamber of City Hall in New York City.

THE JEWISH EPISCOPALIANS

Uriah Levy's death had been as well publicized as his life, and to the Jewish Old Guard it was all a little embarrassing. He had become the best-known Jew in America, with the word "Jew" emblazoned all over him, and his disputatious image—combined with his wife's flamboyant one—was not exactly the one the Jews wished to cultivate. Families such as the Nathans went to pains to explain that Commodore Levy was "not typical," and should therefore *not* be treated—as he himself had obviously wanted to be treated—as some sort of spokesman for the race.

The Sephardim neither needed nor wanted a spokesman. They had integrated quietly into urban American life, and had become gentlefolk. For these people, their Jewishness was something to be kept privately in the background, not to be noisily defended, or boasted or complained about, in the manner of a Uriah Levy. If they wished to be known publicly for anything, it was for their cultivation, breeding, good manners, and good works. It is perhaps ironic that, as the Jewish elite turned from mere moneymaking, almost with a disdainful dusting of their hands, to more elevated pursuits of the mind and spirit, they assured themselves of a less forceful role in America than the one they might have played.

There were, in fact, a number of Sephardic men who took pride in the fact that they did nothing at all. Mr. Alfred Tobias was one of these elegantly situated men. The Tobiases were a Sephardic family, originally from Liverpool, who had made a considerable fortune manufacturing chronometers. The first Tobias to emigrate to America, whose name was Tobias I. Tobias, secured himself rather thoroughly to the New York

Sephardic elite when four of his children, Henry, Fanny, Harriet, and Alfred married four of Harmon Hendricks' children, Roselane, Uriah II, Henry, and Hermoine. Alfred Tobias' sole occupation was "handling his investments"—a task he obviously performed quite well, for he increased his own considerable inheritance as well as those of his already wealthy Hendricks wife, and his wife's two orphaned nieces.

Cousin Florian Tobias was also proud to confess that he had never worked a day in his life at anything that could be called a job, and that he never intended to. Oh, he did a few things. He was an amateur billiard champion, and he practiced every day on his full-size Collender table in the billiard room. He had a small carpenter's shop in the house, where he turned out beautiful picture frames, taborets, screens, and delicate objets d'art. He was an admitted dilettante, and his only practical chore in life occurred when coal was being delivered for the furnaces of his father's house in Forty-eighth Street. Cousin Florian always posted himself outside the house, just beside the coal chute—in his best clothes, of course, and in his top hat—where he counted the number of truckloads that went into the cellar, to make sure that the proper tonnages were being delivered. It was not too taxing a job, or life, and Cousin Florian lived to the comfortable age of seventy-four.

The Hendrickses, meanwhile, were doing nicely. With their copper-rolling mills in New Jersey, their big country estate at Belleville, and their town house at 414 Fifth Avenue, they were among the richest of the Sephardic families. They also owned quite a bit of Manhattan real estate, including the blocks between Sixth and Seventh avenues from Twentieth to Twenty-second streets, and thirty acres along Broadway. (Had the family held on to this, the Hendrickses would be among the city's biggest landowners today.) Of course, there were some people who considered the Hendrickses to be a little on the dull side, a little stuffy.

There were also some odd Hendricks family characteristics, and an individual who was accused, in the group, of being a bit "Hendricksy" was someone who was fussy about dirt to the point of neurosis, was obsessive about cleanliness, or repeatedly washed his hands. Several Hendrickses were compulsive hand-washers, and would never touch a stranger for fear of contamination. Once, so a story went, someone said to one of the Hendrickses at the opera, "Aren't the acoustics in this opera house

terrible?” Sniffing, Mr. Hendricks replied, “Really? I don’t smell anything.” But when the United States government needed money to pay for the War of 1812, the Hendrickses point out, President Madison sought loans from individuals. Henry C. de Rham, of the old New York de Rhams, offered \$32,300. Harmon Hendricks topped him with \$42,000.

By the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Sephardim of New York and other cities were leading lives of comfort and reassurance. If you lived on Fifth Avenue, and most “nice” families lived on or just off it—it ran, after all, along the spine of Manhattan, and one had the nicest views from there—your house probably had a small black box affixed to an inside wall, near the front door. You pulled the handle on the box, a pleasant whirring sound emerged, and presently a messenger boy in knickers and blue cap appeared at your doorstep to carry a letter uptown, or to fetch an order from the druggist’s. You rang a servant’s bell, it tinkled distantly from the panel in the downstairs kitchen, and within moments a servant appeared to do your bidding. Such were the amenities of those long-ago days. And yet the servants’ rooms in the old brownstones were never supplied with baths. Maids, when they bathed at all, were required to use the basement laundry tubs. Wells, where fresh water was drawn, were right on Fifth Avenue.

At the same time, doorknobs were of plated silver, and satin draperies with heavy tassels hung over window curtains of thick lace. Furniture was of gilt rosewood, covered with tufted satin, and tables were of ebony, inlaid with marquetry. A card receiver stood near every entrance. It was the fashion to have, in every formal room, a center table holding ornaments—the Boyer statuettes or the Manet bronzes, or perhaps a Monte Verdi depiction of Benjamin Franklin chaining the lightning. Thanks to the magic of electricity, the house of important downtown businessmen could be supplied with private tickers from the New York Stock Exchange. Mr. Jefferson Levy, Uriah’s banker nephew, who later became a congressman, rather topped everyone in the Sephardic community. He also had a ticker from the London Stock Exchange.

In the dining rooms were red Turkish carpets and family portraits. After dinner, the families repaired to parlors, or to music rooms, where they stood about the rosewood piano for a little singing—“Under the Daisies,” “Listen to the Mockingbird,” “Hidden in the Valley,” or “The Last Rose of Summer.” An aunt might round out the evening playing the “Anvil

Chorus.” Music was considered a boon to the digestive juices. It was a cozy and sentimental era, the 1880’s and 1890’s, and it was hard to believe that it would ever be otherwise, or that the city was changing faster than anyone knew.

Etiquette was stressed more than what went on or appeared in the newspapers. “Always eat your ice cream with a *fork*,” the little Nathan children were advised by the governess. “It’s those Germans who use their spoons. Remember, while they were still peddling with packs on their backs, your family was having dinner with kings and queens.” Of course, there were *mésalliances*. When Rosa Content (of a pre-Revolutionary Sephardic family) married James Seligman (German, of the then international banking house), she always referred to her in-laws as “the peddlers.” As for the Jews of eastern Europe, they were elaborately ignored. Mrs. L. Napoleon Levy (wife of another of Uriah’s nephews, and a Hendricks in her own right), embroidering her family tree on a sampler, put the words “from Europe” next to the name of one of her grandfathers because she could not bring herself to admit—even in such a limited public way as stitchwork—that he had come from Poland. Mrs. Levy liked to remind her children that, at her wedding in 1892, the list of guests had included not only Levys, Hendrickses, Lazaruses, Seixases, and Wolffs, but also Roosevelts, Shackelfords, Rittenhouses, Van Rensselaers, and Kings. The Alfred Tobiases (cousins of Levys) were proud to list among their neighbor and friends the Livingstons, the Barclays, and the Auchinclosses.

There were other proofs of social acceptance by Christians. The Hendrickses belonged to and sailed at the Larchmont Yacht Club in Westchester (which Jews have difficulty joining today), and when the Sephardic families summered, they not only went to the Jersey shore—which would later become known as a Jewish resort area—but also to Newport, Saratoga, and Bar Harbor (which were not only non-Jewish but a bit anti-Jewish and becoming more so). A Hendricks granddaughter attended Miss Gayler’s School in New York. Invited to a party on a Friday night, she replied that she was sorry, she couldn’t attend, “Because that is our Sabbath.” There was nothing further said, but from that point on it was noticed that parties for girls at Miss Gayler’s School were no longer scheduled for Friday evenings, but were given on Saturday nights instead, out of courtesy to the elegant Sephardim.

Of course, there were scandals, and cases of people who refused to fit into the mold. There was the shocking case of Aunt Agnes Hendricks Wolff, who, in the 1890's, had a notorious affair with a non-Jewish gentleman named Townsend. They went off to Paris together and traveled flagrantly through Europe as man and wife, a state of affairs the family found intolerable. The two were written up in *Town Topics*, the leading scandal sheet of the day, and it all came to a tragic end (as anyone who had read the Maria Edgeworth stories could have predicted) when, one day riding with Mr. Townsend on Long Island, Aunt Agnes was thrown from her mount and killed.

Then there was cousin Annie Lazarus, sister of the poetess Emma, one of wealthy Moses Lazarus' six daughters, who was some sort of revolutionary. She was forever crusading for immigrants' rights, and she married a non-Jewish artist named Johnny Johnston. She favored America's intervention in World War I, and when the country remained isolationist she threw up her hands, declared herself disillusioned with the United States, and she and her husband sailed off to Italy, where they lived in a Venetian palazzo with a beautiful garden. She refused to communicate with or receive any of her American friends or relatives but, it was pointed out at the time, she seemed perfectly willing to go on receiving her considerable American income. Her picture was turned against the wall, and her name was permanently dropped from family conversations. How she and her husband fared during the Second World War, no one knows.

And of course there were quarrels. A schism involving a set of Sèvres china of museum quality has long divided the Hendricks family. Years ago, when an estate was being divided, the Sèvres was split between two cousins—a cup here, a saucer there—and its proper ownership has been in dispute ever since. Visiting Mrs. Henry Hendricks, a cousin once remarked, "Ah, I see you have the rest of the Sèvres." "No," said Mrs. Hendricks frostily, "*you* have."

But in general the Sephardim of the late nineteenth century did as they were supposed to do. The men decorated the boards of directors of the proper corporations, and the correct hospitals, museums, and charities. Women engaged in daintier pastimes—painting, reading, letter writing, going to concerts, operas, and ballets. Women were not given much in the way of formal education (the educated woman, little girls were told, had a

hard time finding a husband). But they were cultivated, trained in the arts of charm and wit and small talk on a wide variety of subjects. A surprising number of women—cousin Emma Lazarus is the most famous example—wrote poetry, for their own enjoyment if not for publication.

One of this delicate breed of nineteenth-century woman was Great-Aunt Amelia Barnard Tobias Lazarus, who might have stepped out of the pages of an Edith Wharton novel. Indeed, the young Mrs. Wharton was among Aunt Amelia's circle of friends. Aunt Amelia was not only a Tobias, and therefore connected to the Hendrickses; she was also collaterally descended from Mordecai Gomez, Daniel's brother, and she was therefore connected as well to the Lopezes, Seixases, de Lucenas, and Levys, to say nothing of the Nathans and Cardozos. She was an encapsulation of the great Sephardic strains. In her house in East Ninth Street, just a few doors away from University Place, Aunt Amelia lived a life that had settled elegantly and comfortably into a pattern: congealed, precise, predictable. Her late husband, Jacob Hart Lazarus, who had died in 1891, had been one of the most popular and respected society portraitists of his day—"a nineteenth-century Copley," he had been called. Among other great subjects, he had painted four generations of the Astor family. He left Aunt Amelia amply fixed. The Ninth Street house was a large, three-story affair of red brick where Aunt Amelia was cared for by three maids and her maiden sister, Great-Aunt Sophia Tobias, who "kept house" for Aunt Amelia. On most afternoons, Aunt Amelia could be found reclining—she suffered from angina, and did not move around much—on her long red velvet and mahogany couch in the drawing room, where she conducted what amounted to a perpetual salon.

All the noted personages of the day were her callers: old Mrs. Drexel from Philadelphia, who dropped in on Aunt Amelia whenever she was in New York; Mrs. Delafield; Mrs. Potter; Mrs. Astor, of course. There were also those haughty and rather terrifyingly aristocratic Lazarus cousins known as "the Eleventh Street Lazaruses," who included the formidable and splendid Sarah, and Emma, the poetess, and Frank Lazarus, famous because for years he was to be seen, every day, seated in the same chair in one of the Fifth Avenue windows of the Union Club. For years after his death, the chair was known as "Mr. Lazarus' chair." Another of these Lazaruses was Annie, about whom there had been scandal, and whose name was never

mentioned. These Lazaruses kept a summer “cottage” in Newport. Called “The Beeches,” it was a huge, gabled affair on Bellevue Avenue, hard by “Belcourt,” the Oliver H. P. Belmont mansion, and across the street from “Miramar,” built for Mrs. George Widener.

Aunt Amelia was far from beautiful. In fact, though she was thin and always carried herself erectly—a stern and autocratic bearing—she was actually quite homely, with large, imperiously blazing green eyes. (Her sister, by contrast, was a small, plump, gentle lady with wavy gray hair that was always a bit disarrayed.) Aunt Amelia, however, had learned a secret that has made many a nonbeautiful woman adored by both sexes: she had charm, she had wit, and she had style. Once, when she was shopping for some handkerchiefs, a salesgirl had said to her, “Mrs. Lazarus, those handkerchiefs you’re looking at are very fine—but these other ones might do for mornings around the house.” Aunt Amelia shot her a lofty, amused look and replied, “My dear young woman, I would have you understand that my nose is just as delicate in the mornings as it is in the afternoons.”

Her dinner parties, served in a dining room that had walls covered with gold brocade, were celebrated for the high quality of the conversation as well as for the high station of the guests. To encourage good talk, there were never more than six at table. Dinner began with sherry and ended with champagne and fresh fruit out of season—which no one ate—purchased at considerable expense from Hicks, the great Fifth Avenue fruiterer. Though eminently correct, Aunt Amelia was never totally unappreciative of the risqué. Frank Lazarus often tried to shock her with some bit of *mauvaise plaisanterie* he had picked up in the smoking room at the Union, and, after listening to one of his tales she would cry out, “Frank! You dirty beast!” Then she would lean closer to him and, in a husky stage whisper, ask, “Now what was it you said again?”

The neighborhood around her was deteriorating. She knew it, but she refused to move or to change her mode of life in any way. The house on one side of her had become a laundry, and the one on the other side had become some sort of nightclub—the less said of what probably went on there, the better. Raucous noises emerged from it night and day. Aunt Amelia let neither presence disturb her in the slightest. Inside, her house ran on noiseless machinery. Each morning, her lawyer, “Little Sam” Riker (his father, “Big Sam” Riker, had been the family lawyer before him), arrived

punctually at eight and opened Aunt Amelia's mail, attending to whatever needed attention. It was then Little Sam's duty to go downstairs to the kitchen to see to it that the servants were at their posts, and to unsnarl the quarrels that were forever erupting between the Irish maid and the waitress so that Aunt Amelia's ears might be spared the unpleasant details. The family had repeatedly urged Aunt Amelia to have, in view of her illness, a servant sleep in the room next to hers, but Aunt Amelia would have none of it. That would be lowering the class barrier too far. Servants belonged on a floor of their own. Her servants, nevertheless, were devoted to her. Her personal maid, Josephine, had for years been engaged to marry the coachman for the Alexandre family but, year after year, the wedding date was postponed. It was because Josephine could not bear the thought of leaving Aunt Amelia. Aunt Amelia's only concession to the shabbiness of her neighborhood was made for her maids' benefit. She kept a man's derby hat hung on a hat stand in the entrance vestibule, which was intended to suggest to intruders that there was a man on the premises, whereas in fact hers was a household of women. A man from Tiffany's came to Ninth Street once a week to wind all the clocks.

Great-Aunt Amelia was a stickler for etiquette and the Right Thing, not because she was afraid of making a mistake in public but because she believed the Right Thing was one of the obligations and heavy duties of the aristocrat. When writing a social note, she enjoined her nieces and grandnieces, a lady should never moisten the entire flap of the envelope, but only the tip. Young ladies were told to sit quietly, with hands folded in laps, legs crossed at the ankles. They were not to fidget or play with their beads. Young men were instructed to sit with one leg crossed above the other, knee upon knee, never sprawled with knees apart, or with ankle on knee. Aunt Amelia was one of New York's great authorities on the intricacies of the calling-card ritual—one that has been compared with the Japanese tea ceremony in terms of the years it took a lady of old New York to master it—and even Mrs. Astor sometimes called upon Aunt Amelia, in those days before there was an Emily Post, for social advice and guidance. Though Aunt Amelia's illness caused her to be in great pain much of the time, she never complained. She believed that complaining indicated ill breeding. Once, before a dinner party, she said quietly to a niece, "If I have to leave the table during dinner, I expect you to carry on as hostess in my place. And

of course you must make no point of my absence.” Aunt Amelia also believed that it was one of the moral obligations of the privileged and well-placed to care for the fine things that privilege and high estate provided, that it was as wrong to mistreat a good china plate or piece of furniture as it was to abuse a human being. As a result, every item in her house, from the paintings and the rare books to the heavy linen sheets on the beds, was lovingly attended to.

Morality, propriety, and responsibility were instilled in children by the Maria Edgeworth stories. In these, two sisters, the wise Laura and the impulsive Rosalind, were contrasted, and the moral clearly drawn. In one tale, for example, Rosalind foolishly uses money given her to have a shoe repaired to buy, instead, a pretty purple vase that she has seen in a shop window. Alas, a hole appears in her shoe, a sharp stone enters the hole, and, after an agonizing limp home, when Rosalind puts water in her vase the pretty color washes off. Laura is helpfully there to say, “I told you so.” For boys, there were stories about a bad youth named Frank who was always made to pay dearly for his naughtinesses. Children were also given copies of the *Illustrated London News* to read for edification and enlightenment. Anything British was considered uplifting.

Great-Aunt Amelia Lazarus exuded such an air of social security that one would have thought her incapable of being surprised or impressed by anything. But she was secretly delighted to have been invited to one of the great society “Weddings of the Age,” that of Harry Lehr, the colorful playboy who once, dressed in full fig, waded into a Fifth Avenue fountain, and who had succeeded Ward McAllister as New York Society’s arbiter and Mrs. Astor’s pet. Aunt Amelia also believed that social occasions ought to be combined with a certain amount of self-improvement and, when a niece mentioned that she was going to a reception at the de Forests’, Aunt Amelia reminded her to be sure to note the fine Indian carving that adorned the wall by the de Forests’ staircase. “One must learn first to recognize, then appreciate, beautiful things,” she used to say.

Perhaps such an extraordinary degree of refinement and high breeding among the Sephardim is an explanation for the fact that they took a far less active part in the Civil War than they had taken in the Revolution and the

War of 1812. Nor did they join the band of aggressive, hungry fortune hunters that emerged after the War—the Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, Guggenheims, Morgans, Mellons, Schiffs, et al. The Sephardim stood politely on the sidelines. The only Sephardic name of any importance to Civil War buffs is that of Judah P. Benjamin, and he had the misfortune to be on the wrong side. One of the great rows in the history of New York’s Union Club was over Mr. Benjamin’s proposed ouster. Those in the club who wanted him out did so not because Benjamin was Jewish but because he was pro-South. The club refused to expel him, and a group of irate members immediately departed and formed a club of their own, the *Union League Club*.

Judah Benjamin was a member of a West Indian Sephardic family, distantly connected to the branch of the Lopez family that had settled there, as well as to the Mendes family, and in 1818 his parents moved from the island of Saint Thomas, where he was born, to Charleston, South Carolina. Though he attended Yale (without receiving a degree), his youthful orientation was thoroughly southern. After Yale, he went to New Orleans, where he “read” law in a law office, and he was admitted to the Louisiana bar in 1832. In 1852, he was elected a senator from Louisiana, and here demonstrated that he had a Latin temper every bit as fiery as Uriah Levy’s. In reply to a slur from another senator, Judah Benjamin rose and declaimed: “The gentleman will please remember that when his half-civilized ancestors were hunting wild boar in the forests of Silesia, mine were the princes of the earth!” (Actually, he was paraphrasing Disraeli, who once, in answer to a similar taunt, said: “Yes, I am a Jew, and when the ancestors of the right honourable gentleman were brutal savages in an unknown island, mine were priests in the temple of Solomon.”)

Benjamin resigned from the Senate in order to assist his friend Jefferson Davis in forming his provisional government. He worked in Davis’ cabinet, first as attorney general and later as Davis’ chief secretary of state, a post he held from 1862 to 1865.

After the Confederacy’s surrender at Appomattox, there was a price on Judah Benjamin’s head. He managed to make an escape by boat from the coast of Florida and, many months later, after much hardship and bouncing about on troubled Atlantic waters, Benjamin was able to make his way to England, where he lived in exile. He died in Paris in 1884, a lonely and

disenchanted man, a long way from the crackling fires and comfortable chairs of the Union Club.

“NATHANS DON’T CHEAT”—BUT DO THEY KILL?

The Nathans were such a *proper* family, and could nearly always be counted on to do the correct thing, to rise to the occasion in the right manner, to make the suitable gesture. Young Frederick Nathan was barely more than a boy when he was traveling in the South with Griffith, the family’s Negro chauffeur. The two were about to board a steamer when Frederick was told, “He can’t ride with you.” “Very well,” Frederick Nathan said, “I’ll ride with him”—and he did, he rode with Griffith in the ship’s Jim Crow quarters rather than accept the segregation the South imposed. Nathans were always doing things like that. It was no wonder that, for generations, a Nathan had been president of New York’s Shearith Israel congregation.

The great Nathan family patriarch was Isaac Mendes Seixas Nathan. His uncle had been Gershom Mendes Seixas, called “the patriot rabbi” for refusing to let his congregation pray for George III. Isaac M. S. Nathan’s grandmother had been one of the old New York Levys, and he himself had married another Seixas and, by her, sired a dynastic brood of fifteen children. He ruled his household with a series of bells—a different bell summoned each child into his father’s presence. He also had bells to indicate the various punishments that were to be meted out for whatever misdeed was at hand; one bell meant a birching, another bed without supper, and so on. The combination of children bells and punishment bells made the Nathan house chime like a carillon most of the day. He was a

tyrant and a terror, and his children adored him. They all made properly dynastic marriages—one to a Solis, one to a Cardozo, two to Hendrickses, one to a Gomez, a great-grandniece of Daniel's—and were otherwise a tribute to their father.

When the little Nathan children were strolled by their nannies in Central Park during those pleasant decades after the Civil War, they used to hear passersby whisper, "Look—the Nathans," and "Here come the Nathans!" The children assumed, naturally enough, that this attention was due to their celebrated birthright and social superiority. But the real reason had nothing to do with this. Scandal in the family, after all, was so rare as to be unknown, and naturally the dreadful details of it had to be kept from the Nathan children. It was a scandal that was rocking the entire Sephardic community.

New York in 1870 was entering its most elegant phase, soon to be christened by Edith Wharton as "the Age of Innocence." West Twenty-third Street at Madison Square was considered "uptown," and the *New York Herald* referred to this neighborhood as one of the city's "aristocratic purlieus." Here, on broad, tree-lined streets, facing a leafy park, in tall private brownstone houses, lived the city's rich, including Mr. Benjamin Seixas Nathan, the banker, grandson of the founding American patriarch, and one of New York's wealthiest and most prominent men. The Nathans—Benjamin Nathan was married to the former Emily Hendricks—and their nine children lived at number 12 West Twenty-third. On an opposite corner, the old Fifth Avenue Hotel had gone up a few years earlier—up to the astonishing height of six stories, and equipped with something called an elevator, which was said actually to lift persons with courage to try it to the topmost level. The Nathans, good parents that they were, had severely cautioned their children never to enter this unlikely contraption.

New Yorkers that summer, when not discussing the elevator, were talking about the weather. It was hot. New York summers were no less stifling and humid a hundred years ago than they are today. New Yorkers also talked about a new war in Europe, which the Prussians had maneuvered France into declaring against them. American sentiment favored the Germans, due to the unhelpful behavior of Napoleon III during the Civil War. There was talk, too, of Jefferson Davis, now a private citizen from Mississippi, who passed through New York—surely feeling very much amid alien corn—on

his way to board a Cunarder to England. It had been a slow season for the theater. *Fritz, Our Cousin German*, was playing at Wallack's, and the Booth was preparing to open with its first offering, *Rip Van Winkle*, with Joseph Jefferson in the title role. At the Grand Opera House, three blocks west of Madison Square, something called the "Viennoise Ballet and Pantomime Troupe" was being offered. It was an age of flounces and ruffles on women's dresses, when men wore bowled hats and braid-trimmed overcoats, and every gentleman of fashion had whiskers. People complained of an infestation of "measuring worms" in the city; they dropped from trees on to women's hats and parasols, and there was a plan afoot to import the English sparrow to consume the worms. By late July, all the "best" people had left the city for lake shores or sea breezes, including the Nathans, who had removed to their summer place in Morristown, New Jersey—or so everyone thought. Then, all at once, at the end of July, all of New York's attention—and much of the country's—was riveted on Benjamin Nathan and his family.

Benjamin Nathan was a quiet, kindly-faced man with mutton chop sideburns and thick spectacles without which he could barely see. Despite this handicap, Ben Nathan had had a distinguished career and, in 1870, he was a vice-president of the New York Stock Exchange, president of Mount Sinai Hospital, a member of the Union Club, the Union League Club, and the Saint Nicholas Society, and a colonel on the governor's honorary staff. He was, in short, the model of a proper nineteenth-century New York gentleman, and there were even some in the family who had the temerity to call Ben a "Jewish Episcopalian."

On Thursday, July 28, Mr. Nathan and two of his sons—Frederick, twenty-six, and Washington, twenty-one—had come unexpectedly to New York from Morristown on business, and had arrived at 12 West Twenty-third Street to spend the night. The men's arrival was quite a surprise to the housekeeper, a Mrs. Kelly, and her son William, who worked for the Nathans as a general chore boy. The house was being redecorated, and most of the furniture had gone out to the upholsterer's. But Mr. Nathan explained that he wanted to stay in New York because he planned, the next day, to go to the synagogue to say prayers in memory of his mother, the former Sarah Seixas, the anniversary of whose death it was. Mrs. Kelly improvised a bed for her employer by placing several mattresses on top of each other on the

floor in a second-floor room, and she did the same for the two boys in rooms above. Mr. Nathan spent the early part of the evening with his sons. Then both young men dressed and left, in separate directions, for gayer surroundings than the half-empty brownstone. Both returned—again separately, young Wash Nathan much the later—well after midnight. Each son looked in on his father, saw him sleeping peacefully in his makeshift bed, then mounted the stairs to his own room.

A word should be injected here about Washington Nathan. He was considered one of New York's most dashing young men. Tall, thin, always exquisitely groomed, he possessed good looks that were described by one lady as "agonizing beauty," and it was said that the touch of his slender, perfectly manicured hand caused the strongest-hearted woman to swoon. Women fussed over him wherever he went, exclaiming over his "large candid blue eyes," and by the time he had reached his twenties he was thoroughly spoiled. It was widely said in the family—and out of it, for that matter—that the reason why Wash's cousin Emma Lazarus, the poetess, never married was that all her life she harbored a "violent passion" for him while he paid not the slightest attention to her. Poor Emma. She doubtless possessed intellectual charms and vociferous opinions (on Zionism, for instance) which attracted to her male friends like Emerson and Browning, but she was at best a plain-looking woman, with features that always seemed too large for her face, and unfortunate skin. It was also said that Washington Nathan spent thirty thousand dollars a year—a huge sum in 1870—pursuing the pleasures of his rakish life. And it was known that his father disapproved of his "habits," and that the two had quarreled often about the young man's spending.

After his sons left the house, Benjamin Nathan had rung for his housekeeper and asked for a glass of ice water. This was at around ten o'clock. Mrs. Kelly then locked and bolted both front and back doors of the house, closed and locked all the windows, as was her nightly custom, said good night to her employer, and proceeded to her own room. Around eleven she was awakened by a brief thunderstorm, which subsided well before midnight. This is all that is known for sure of events that night at 12 West Twenty-third Street. Early the following morning, a guest at the Fifth Avenue Hotel looked out his window and saw two young men come

running down the steps of the house shouting for help—the Nathan boys, one half dressed, the other dripping with blood.

Upstairs, Benjamin Nathan lay dead, murdered in the most deliberate and brutal fashion. This kindly and gentle man, who no one could believe had a single enemy, had been repeatedly beaten by a heavy weapon and clearly by someone intent upon his total destruction. Ghastly wounds covered the body, bones had been broken, and there was a particularly savage wound in the center of the forehead. He had apparently been dragged from the room where he had been sleeping, and his body lay in a doorway between that and an adjacent room, used as a study, in a pool of blood. There were clear signs of a terrible struggle. Furniture was overturned, and blood was splattered on the floor, walls, and frame of the door. In the study, a small safe had been forced open and on top of the pile of mattresses was an open cashbox. A large and heavy object, covered with blood, was found in another room—a “carpenter’s dog,” a J-shaped instrument used for gripping and hooking—clearly the murder weapon. Since the family had been away, and the house was being redecorated, nothing of value had been in the safe. A quick inventory of the items stolen was pitifully small: three diamond shirt studs, two watches, and a gold medal. Of course no one could say what might have been removed from the cashbox, but Mr. Nathan surely would not have kept much cash in his empty house. Immediately a telegram was dispatched to Morristown: FATHER IN AN ACCIDENT. COME AT ONCE.

There ensued one of the most bizarre murder cases in the history of New York crime, and before it was over it had received worldwide attention, even in Russia, where the Jewish press commented on “the murder of a wealthy and influential New York Jew.” It was a traumatic experience for a family that had always studiously avoided publicity of any sort whatever.

Immediately—awful though it sounded—the prime suspect became Washington Nathan, with his dissolute nature, who was suspected of having murdered, in Lizzie Borden fashion (though that case was still more than twenty years away), his own father. Frederick, the “good son,” known to have worshiped his father, was never for a moment under suspicion. What must have happened, it was argued, was this: Wash Nathan had come home from his evening on the town, had stepped into his father’s room to ask for money, and had been refused. The two had argued. Finally, in a rage, Wash had grabbed the odd instrument—carpenters working in the house might

have left it lying about—and attacked his father. He had then rifled the safe and cashbox. New York newspapers were soon hinting that “someone from inside” must be the guilty party. How could a murderer have entered a locked and bolted house? Wash Nathan’s guilt seemed terribly likely.

At the inquest that followed, a long series of contradictory and confusing facts began to emerge. The doctor who first examined the body testified that he did so at 6:05 A.M., and that in his opinion Mr. Nathan had been dead for three to four hours, no longer. This would place the time of death at between 2 and 3 A.M. The policeman on the block, John Mangam, testified that he checked the front door of the Nathan house at 1:30 and 4:30 A.M., as a matter of routine, and on both occasions found the door securely locked, and saw no signs of any disturbances within the house. Other residents of the neighborhood, however, stepped forth to say that Officer Mangam was not as diligent as he claimed to be, and that they had never known him to check the door of any house.

Then there was the testimony of the guest at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and the matter of which Nathan brother had been partly dressed and which had been covered with blood. This was important because the brothers had told the police that Washington had been the first to come downstairs that morning, dressed and ready for the early visit to the synagogue. He had seen his father and immediately cried out to Frederick, who then came running down the stairs, partly dressed. Frederick told the police that he knelt briefly beside his father, and touched him, thus becoming covered with blood, and then both brothers had run shouting down another flight of stairs to the street—through a front door that, both claimed, was standing wide open. At first, the hotel guest—a Major General Blair—identified Frederick as the bloodied and undressed one, and Washington as the clothed one, thus corroborating both brothers’ story. But then he changed his mind, and insisted that it was the other way around, making liars out of both Mr. Nathan’s sons. Frederick Nathan had a heavy beard. Washington Nathan had a small moustache. There was little family resemblance, and it would be difficult to mix them up. On the other hand, General Blair had viewed the scene from diagonally across the street, through trees and from an upper story, in the early morning light and through sleepy eyes. His testimony could not be weighted too heavily.

Then there was the altogether baffling fact that although four other people were sleeping in the house at the time, no one had heard a sound of what must have been a terrible and screaming ordeal—furniture overturned, a body bludgeoned again and again, dragged across a room. The two sons, just one floor above, claimed to have heard nothing. Mrs. Kelly had heard the storm earlier, but nothing after that. Her son William had heard nothing. The Walton Peckhams, who owned the house nearest to the Nathans'—separated from it by eighty feet—said yes, they thought they had heard noises, thumping, a bang or two, a door slammed. At first, they thought it was the storm, then perhaps a burglar in their own house, and finally conjectured that it might be coming from next door. Mr. Peckham said he was positive the hour of the noises was 2:30 A.M., though he had not consulted his watch. He knew because he had had “a good sound sleep” before being awakened, and that meant it had to be two-thirty. His bumps and slams had to be discounted.

Though it was a stifling city night, all windows in the Nathans' neighborhood appeared to have been firmly shut against the slightest breeze. This seemed strange to some people, but of course there had been that storm and there was also, in 1870, a belief some householders shared that night air was injurious to health, even deadly. From across the street, meanwhile, General Blair's hotel window had been open all night long, but he had heard nothing until the brothers came running into the street.

Then there was the problem of the murder weapon. Where had it come from? One of the workmen at the Nathan house said yes, he thought he had seen something of the sort lying about in the days previous to the murder. But another said no, there had definitely never been a “dog” of that sort in the house. Though it was described as a carpenter's dog, the Nathan carpenters said it was not theirs; it was not, in fact, a tool used in their sort of work but was used primarily in logging operations. Logging operations! The killer had carried his weapon a long way to a fashionable address in Manhattan. It was also not a tool customarily employed by safecrackers, although it was quite possible that it could be used that way. Another expert on “dogs” came forth to say that this was not a logging implement at all, but was used “to lay the flooring of yachts and other small vessels.” The inquiry appeared to be leading nowhere.

All sorts of unlikely people came forth now to contribute evidence leading to an explanation of what might, or might not, have happened that night at 12 West Twenty-third. A young newsboy, James Nies, said he had been delivering his papers on that street at around 5 A.M. and, when passing the Nathan mansion, saw a man “dressed like a mason” walk up the steps of the house, stoop, and pick up a strange piece of yellow paper which “looked like a check.” The alleged mason studied the piece of paper, pocketed it, and departed. Who was the mason? The murderer returned to the scene of his crime when he discovered he had dropped some incriminating document? A mere passerby curious to see what scrap of paper might be lying outside the front door of a rich man’s house? And what had the piece of paper been—something dropped from the burglar’s haul? Neither the piece of paper nor the mason ever turned up, and the investigation struck another blind alley.

Next came a report of mysterious midnight goings-on outside the mansion of Samuel F. B. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph. The Morse house, on West Twenty-second Street, backed up to the Nathan house and, according to the Morses’ caretaker, a Mr. Devoy, he had returned home about twelve-thirty on the night in question and had seen a strange coach and pair standing in front of the Morse stables. A man was lying inside the coach, and Mr. Devoy asked him to move on. Mr. Devoy said he believed a second man was inside the coach, and that he had heard at least two men “whispering” within—but he could not be sure. Later, his wife told him that the coach had been there since at least ten-thirty, and that it remained there for at least another hour after Devoy told the occupant to go, and that around two o’clock a heavily cloaked driver mounted the box and drove rapidly away.

Perhaps the oddest testimony of all came from a Miss Annie Keenan, a music teacher from New Jersey. Miss Keenan had been walking along Twenty-third Street on the evening of the twenty-eighth, at around 8:30 P.M., and had seen a man with “a crazy look” in his eye poking furtively about the front stoop of the Nathan house. He appeared to have “some rigid object” stuffed up the sleeve of his coat—the “dog,” of course. While Miss Keenan watched, the man entered the Nathan house through a basement window and, as he did so, there was a loud “clank” as his arm struck the window frame—proving that it was the dog. A letter, signed “A.K.H.,”

arrived at police headquarters under a Washington postmark and, in return for eight hundred dollars, “to be left inside the railing of Grace Church,” the writer offered to return “the papers” that would solve the case. An attempt was made to draw some connection between “A.K.H.” and Annie Keenan’s initials, but this proved fruitless, as did an effort to connect these “papers” with the newsboy’s yellow slip.

At around the same time, a lawyer named Thomas Dunphy got himself sorrily entangled with an already hopelessly entangled case. Mr. Dunphy, who had a theory of how the murder had been committed, was acting out his theory for the benefit of some women friends in Brooklyn. Unfortunately, he chose to demonstrate the murder method using the first person pronoun—“I lunged toward him,” etc.—and must have given a convincing performance, because an eavesdropping neighbor overheard the scene, was certain she was listening to a firsthand account of the Nathan murder, and called the police. Mr. Dunphy spent an uncomfortable night in jail before it was demonstrated that he could have had nothing to do with it.

Naturally, the person the press and public were most eager to hear testify was Washington Nathan. He arrived on the witness stand looking cool, composed, and well-tailored, carrying a gold-handled stick, gray gloves, and a tall silk hat. He described himself as “commission merchant,” with offices at 25 Water Street downtown, but his account of the evening of July 28 was nowhere near so simple. After leaving his father, he said, he spent “an hour or two” simply strolling around New York. First he walked up Fifth Avenue to the Saint James Hotel, then over to Twenty-fourth and Broadway, then into Madison Square Park—very near his home—where he listened for a while to a band concert. Meeting a friend there, he walked back to the Saint James, where each had a glass of sherry. Next he walked down Broadway to the point at which it met Fifth Avenue, where he met “these two girls”—and he waved his hand, indicating that the young ladies were in the courtroom. The three then walked to Delmonico’s, and he said good-bye to them there, going into the coffee room to read the papers. For a celebrated *bon vivant*, he was having a singularly dull evening.

He then went back to the Saint James *again*—but no sherry this time—and then toward home, popping into the Fifth Avenue Hotel on the way. He met a friend there and stayed for a chat. At about nine, he left the hotel and headed for a crosstown bus. He rode down to East Fourteenth Street, near

the Academy of Music, and entered a house at number 104. He stayed until around midnight—delayed slightly by the storm—and then went back uptown to Broadway and Twenty-first Street, entering Brown & Kingsley’s restaurant, where he had supper: Welsh rarebit. From there he went straight home, let himself in with a key, locked the door behind him, and went upstairs. He looked in on his father, saw him sleeping peacefully, and continued upstairs to his own room. He heard nothing during the night, saw nothing more of his father until the following morning, when he found him lying on the floor in a pool of blood—with the front door standing wide open.

He testified that it was not true that he and his father had ever had any serious quarrels. He insisted there was no foundation for reports that he spent thirty thousand dollars annually on pleasurable pursuits, and doubted that he spent more than three thousand dollars. His father, he said, had given him a five-thousand-dollar stake to start him in business, and any arguments about Wash’s spending had been minor. He painted a picture of a warm relationship between father and son, and on the whole gave a confident, poised performance.

For some reason it was deemed necessary to verify Wash’s account of his whereabouts between nine and twelve. The reason may have been the sheer delectation of the courtroom audience, because it was soon entertainingly clear just what sort of house it was that the young man had visited at 104 East Fourteenth Street during those three hours. A lady called Clara Dale was summoned to the stand, and a great deal of space in the press was devoted to her costume and appearance. The *Herald* reported:

Miss Dale was very gaily attired in a costly dress of green striped silk, embellished with all the usual paraphernalia of panier, flounces and trimmings. She wore light colored lavender kid gloves and over a jaunty round hat of the latest pattern was spread a green veil which hung down over her face almost completely hiding it from view. Beneath this she wore a black lace “masked battery” which totally covered the upper portion of her face.

The reporter from the *World*, meanwhile, despite the veils and masks, found that “her face was full and fair, with large blue eyes, and her

physique and carriage were stately.” It also noted her hair, in “waterfall and puffs,” and her shoes, “with preposterous high brass heels and white pearl buttons and tassels.” Miss Dale testified that Mr. Washington Nathan had been with her during the hours of nine and twelve on the fatal night—which, of course, did nothing to establish his whereabouts at the time of the murder, two hours later.

But who killed good Benjamin Nathan? As the months dragged on, the answer seemed to grow increasingly elusive. For all the suspicion that surrounded young Wash, there was not a shred of evidence. Where was he at the time? Home in bed, he said, and there was no one to prove otherwise. The New York Stock Exchange—which had lowered its flag to half staff to mourn the passing of a member—had offered a ten-thousand-dollar reward for the apprehension of the killer. The Nathan family had added to this, and presently the Nathan murder reward had mounted to over thirty thousand dollars. This led to the usual number of crank letters with offers to provide information, which proved unfounded, and to a series of false “confessions.” Several suspects were arrested, then released for lack of evidence. The months turned into years.

At one point a convict at Sing Sing named George Ellis—who could have obtained a pardon for bringing a murderer to justice, and therefore had much to gain—came forward and announced that if he could see the murder weapon he could identify the murderer. In great secrecy, Ellis was brought down to New York from prison and taken into a room where Police Chief Jourdan had assembled some twenty-five carpenters’ dogs, of assorted shapes and sizes, collected from hardware stores across the city. Without hesitation, Ellis walked to the murder weapon and pointed: “This is the one.” It belonged, he said, to a burglar he knew named Billy Forrester, who had once told him of a plan he had to rob the Nathan house. Forrester was traced to Texas, brought to New York, and subjected to intensive interrogation. One of the “witnesses” brought to confront him was Annie Keenan, the New Jersey music teacher, who immediately identified him as the man with the “crazy look” she had seen that night—despite the fact that over two years had passed, and the woman was demonstrated to be extremely nearsighted. In the end it was decided that despite Ellis’ astonishing identification of the weapon—which could, of course, have been a coincidence—and Miss Keenan’s testimony, these two facts did not

add up to a case against Billy Forrester, and he was released. Because there never was a solid suspect, there never was a trial. Today, a hundred years later, the case remains unsolved.

A number of people have taken up the Benjamin Nathan murder, and reexamined all the confusing, contradictory evidence. One of the stranger accounts is in a book called *Recollections of a New York Chief of Police*, written seventeen years after the event by ex-Chief George Walling. Walling builds up a damaging case against Washington Nathan, and speaks of the young man “clinking glasses with the *demi-monde*” on the night of the killing. He also claims that, in the weeks following his father’s death, Wash Nathan wore “a handkerchief like a bandage” around his neck, despite the fact that this was not mentioned in any of the contemporary newspaper reports, nor at the inquest. Walling implies, of course, that Wash Nathan wore the bandage to cover wounds earned in a mortal struggle with his father. But then, after all but accusing Wash—who was still living at the time, and presumably could have sued—Walling reverses himself and points to William Kelly, the housekeeper’s son, who, Walling claims, admitted burglars to the house that night. Walling’s final claim is equally illogical. He says that Police Chief Jourdan, the chief at the time of the crime, failed to solve the murder because “the full horror of it was too much for him to bear.”

Most theorists on the case end up with burglary as the motive, and a number believe that Kelly—who, at the time of the inquest, was shown to have a number of unsavory friends—may have been an accomplice. They speculate that a burglar, or burglars, entered the house that night, and were in the process of opening the safe, using the carpenter’s dog as a prying tool, when they were overheard by Mr. Nathan, who rose from his bed and went into the study, surprising them at their work. But it was a clumsy tool for a burglary, and a foolish time to do it, with five people in a house that was empty of furniture and rugs, where the safe had been emptied of all important valuables. Was the open safe just the killer’s way to make burglary *seem* to be the motive?

One tiny fact may be significant. Benjamin Nathan, we know, suffered from extreme myopia, and was virtually blind without his thick, steel-rimmed spectacles. The first thing he did on rising each morning was to clamp his glasses across his nose. He did this before he put his feet on the

floor. Would he, if he had heard strange sounds in the night from the room next door, have risen to investigate a possible burglary without putting on his glasses? The glasses were found, carefully folded, on the table beside his makeshift bed of mattresses a long way from that bloodied scene, as though their owner had been dragged out of bed with intent to kill.

In the Nathan family, there has never been a moment's suspicion that Washington Nathan could have murdered his father. To a Nathan, it would be something "not done." And newspaper reports at the time of the tragedy, despite the grisly sensationalism attached to such a possibility, always pointed out that "Parricide is extremely rare among Jews."

Several private facts about the case have long been available within the family. For one thing, Wash Nathan was, at the time, having a love affair with a New York society woman somewhat older than he, who happened to be married. His honor as a gentleman, and as a Nathan, would not permit him to tell his exact whereabouts that night, for that would have disgraced the lady's name. Hence his incongruous account of wandering up and down New York streets and in and out of restaurants. "Clara Dale," in her green and purple flounces and spiky shoes, had merely been a bit of window dressing suggested—and hired—by family lawyers. The Nathans also feel that the murderer would have been found if the case had not been mishandled from the start—and by a relative, at that. Judge Albert Cardozo, Benjamin Nathan's brother-in-law (and the father of the future Supreme Court justice), had been running for political office at the time. He had immediately taken charge of things, paying great attention to what was "seemly," and thus good for his political career. Whenever an unseemly fact turned up, the judge took pains to bury it.

The Nathans never moved back to 12 West Twenty-third. Its associations were too painful. The family used to recall, a little sadly, how proud Ben had been of his new house when he built it; he was particularly proud of the massive thickness of its walls. He wanted his house to be soundproof. If he had not been so successful, someone might have heard his cries for help.

Like so many beautiful young men of golden promise, Washington Nathan came to a sad end. He received \$75,000 under his father's will, another \$25,000 from a grandmother, and \$10,000 from an aunt. But his life continued to be dissolute and wasteful, and in a few years he had gone through it all. He was seldom seen as a "commission merchant" down on

Water Street, but more often at Delmonico's, or the Fifth Avenue Hotel, or at Brown & Kingsley's. These lounges were his favorite haunts, and he could usually be found there, with this or that young lady "of fashion" or of the Clara Dale variety, and people commented that he was not aging well. By thirty, he looked haggard and old.

In 1879 his mother died, leaving an estate—huge for its day—of over a million Hendricks dollars, \$100,000 in a trust fund for Wash. This money was tightly controlled by family lawyers and the bank, and was designed to give Wash a fixed income of a hundred dollars a week. On this skinflint sum he apparently did poorly, and the year of his mother's death his name appeared again—and unpleasantly—in the newspapers. While calling on an actress named Alice Harrison in a hotel suite, he was shot and wounded in the neck by a woman named Fanny Barrett. The bullet lodged in his jaw, and was never removed. At the time, though, one New York physician offered a unique plan. He would operate on Wash's jaw and, when he got his patient drowsy and talkative under morphine, he would dredge the truth out of him about the Nathan murder. No one took him up on his offer.

In 1884 Wash married a non-Jewish widow named Nina Mapleson Arnott, and left the United States. For a while the couple lived in London, then they went to Paris. As he moved into the Mauve Decade, Wash Nathan was often seen in the bar at the Hotel Chatham, alone and looking bewildered, and it was noted that he had grown quite fat.

In 1891, he was sued by French creditors for \$1,590 and an attempt was made to break the trust in order to collect the debt. But at home in New York the courts ruled that his mother's trust could not be violated for this purpose, and the French debt went uncollected.

By the late 1880's Washington Nathan had been reported to be in poor health. In the summer of 1892, he went to Boulogne for some sea air. On July 25—the anniversary, very nearly, of the death of his father, who, on the night of his *own* death, had remained in New York to commemorate the anniversary of yet another Nathan's death—he collapsed and died after a walk alone on the beach. He was forty-four years old. His hair, they said, had turned completely white.

“CARDOZOS DON’T CRY”

Uncle Albert Cardozo, the judge, continued to exert a baleful influence on the House of Nathan. He had been elected justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York—a post his father, Michael Hart Cardozo, had been nominated for, though the senior Cardozo died before the election—and the Cardozos took themselves very seriously and lived every bit as grandly as their Nathan cousins (Albert was married to Benjamin Nathan’s sister Rebecca). The Cardozo house stood at 12 West Forty-seventh Street, diagonally opposite the Jay Gould mansion, which was always bustling with the arrival and departure of carriages, footmen, and liveried servants; from their earliest days the Cardozo children were made to feel part of a world of wealth and consequence. Cardozos were said to come by their lofty position naturally. During the Inquisition, a Cardozo had actually claimed that he was the Messiah. Refusing to convert, he was marched to the stake boldly proclaiming: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One!”

Albert Cardozo’s children—there were seven—were all carefully taught to be able to recite, upon command from any of their elders, the words from the prophet Micah: “To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God.” They were taught to “treat the rich and the poor alike, be kind and civil to those in thy employ.” They were instructed to “avoid not the society of your brethren but be firm in faith. Be good citizens and seek the welfare of the community in which you dwell.” Unfortunately, Judge Albert Cardozo, from his high position on the New York State bench, had

difficulty adhering to the letter of these worthy mottoes, particularly the latter.

“Boss” William Tweed and his infamous Ring ruled New York in those days, and Tweed was finding the friendship of prominent judges most useful in his operations. Tweed seemed to find Albert Cardozo—with his distinguished façade, his gift of oratory, his air of complete incorruptibility—a particularly helpful man to have on his side. Tweed was interested in naturalization: not the slower legal kind, but the instant and illegal kind, whereby thousands of new immigrants were daily made into American citizens, who naturally were eager to vote for Boss Tweed. Justice Albert Cardozo was one of a trio of judges—the others were George G. Barnard and John H. McCann—who countenanced this activity.

Another ally of Boss Tweed’s was Albert Cardozo’s neighbor Jay Gould, the railroad manipulator, for whose machinations—he bought and ruined railroads to the right and left of him—it is said that American railroading has been paying to this day. Jay Gould—for financial support—could be very useful to Boss Tweed, and Boss Tweed—for political support—could be useful to Jay Gould. Soon it appeared that at another point of the triangle, within the state judiciary, Justice Albert Cardozo was also being helpful. When a railroad went bankrupt, it was up to the courts to appoint a supposedly impartial referee to help it put its affairs in order and settle its debts. Certainly Cardozo was uncommonly partial in his appointments of refereeships whenever Gould-wrecked railroad companies were in need of financial reorganization. Out of almost six hundred refereeships that Cardozo was authorized to bestow, over three hundred were given to one of Boss Tweed’s nephews, and more than a hundred went to Boss Tweed’s son. Jay Gould’s most notorious adventure, of course, was the one by which he enormously inflated, then utterly destroyed, the stock of the Erie Railroad, a feat that made millions for Gould and rocked the American economy for months thereafter. In the financial carnage that followed, it was necessary to appoint a receiver for the railroad. At the suggestion of Boss Tweed, Albert Cardozo appointed another Tweed henchman. This was too much for the New York State Bar Association, which ordered an investigation into Mr. Justice Cardozo and his activities.

In the Sephardic community as well as within the family, it was assumed that Uncle Albert would do the manly thing: stand up to the investigation,

lay his cards on the table, and demonstrate that he had been guilty of no wrongdoing. But Uncle Albert failed them utterly. Instead of submitting to the inquiry, he resigned his post on the bench, leaving a distinct impression of guilt behind him, and an odor of malfeasance surrounding the Cardozo name. Had Tweed and Gould paid off their good friend? Uncle Albert always insisted that they had not, but no one quite believed him, since, by resigning, he had sidestepped the inquiry. Also, it had appeared to many people that the Cardozos lived awfully well—far better than would seem possible on a state justice’s salary. After stepping down from the bench, Uncle Albert resumed a quiet practice of law, and the Cardozos lived less well.

All this was in 1873, when Albert’s youngest son, Benjamin Nathan Cardozo, was just three years old. (Benjamin had been just a few months old when the uncle after whom he was named had been so brutally murdered.) Six years later, when he was only nine, his mother died, and an even darker atmosphere fell upon the Cardozos’ house. Mr. Gould and Boss Tweed were no longer friends of the family. More and more the ostentatious style of life across Fifth Avenue at the Gould mansion was in painful contrast with that at 12 West Forty-seventh. Albert Cardozo used to complain in his twilight years that he was “the victim of politics.” “I was a victim of politics, a victim of politics,” he would insist again and again, and his family, out of loyalty and love, took this sympathetic line. But everywhere the bitter truth was well known: Albert was a weakling.

Within the tight little world of the Sephardim, Albert’s plight was the cause of deep embarrassment. After all, if such disgrace could befall a member of one of the oldest, one of the leading families, what did it say about all the others who considered themselves the “few” elite, buttressed against the ruffian horde that stood outside the gate? This, on top of all the leering publicity the Nathan murder trial had generated, seemed almost too much to bear. What was the point of being able to say (as some of the Gomez descendents liked to say, rather slyly, apropos of the new-rich Germans), “We made *our* money in wampum,” when a member of the family of Albert Cardozo’s stature could prove himself to be so easily corruptible? If anything, Albert Cardozo’s misfortunes had the effect upon the Sephardim of making them draw together into an even tighter knot of privacy and privilege. Now the Sephardim seemed to want to pull a shell

around themselves, a chrysalis that would be impervious to prying from outside.

Within these contours of Sephardic life, Benjamin Nathan Cardozo grew up. His was a notably unhappy childhood. And yet, if it had not been for the family misfortunes, in particular his father's disgrace, it is quite unlikely that Benjamin Cardozo would have become the man he came to be. Because, from his earliest boyhood, he set out upon a life plan designed to exonerate, or at least vindicate, his father, and bring back honor to the Cardozo name.

His growing up was not particularly helped by his father's choice of tutor for him. Albert Cardozo was a snob—which may have been at the root of many of his troubles—and keeping up with the Joneses was one of his preoccupations. In the 1880's the family to keep up with was, of all people, that of Joseph Seligman, the German Jew who had arrived in New York in the 1830's with one hundred dollars sewn in the seat of his pants, had started off as a foot peddler in Pennsylvania, and had succeeded to the extent that he now headed an international banking house that did business with the Rothschilds. To the older Sephardic group, it seemed that the Seligmans and their ilk had taken on preposterous airs, and they were actually getting into select clubs such as the Union. A few years earlier, Joseph Seligman had startled New York's Jewish community, and the rest of the city as well, by hiring Horatio Alger to tutor his children. Not to be outdone by an upstart immigrant German, Albert Cardozo decided to do the same for his son Ben, and Mr. Alger joined the Cardozo household.

Small and roly-poly, with a round bald head and squinting, nearsighted eyes, Mr. Alger was described by one of the family as "a dear, absurd little man." He was certainly a far cry from his rags-to-riches newsboy heroes in such then-popular romances as *Ragged Dick* and *Tattered Tom*. He was flutily effeminate, with mincing ways and a fondness for practicing ballet positions in his spare time, crying out such exclamations as "Oh, lawsy me!" or bursting into wild tears when things went wrong. Yet he once seriously announced his candidacy for President of the United States after a friend, as a joke, told him he could defeat Garfield.

The immense popularity of his books had made Alger a rich man, but he always considered his true forte to be poetry, which he wrote very badly. He once wrote a poem—of which the kindest critical word was

“interminable”—explaining American life. And because he had created boy folk heroes, he saw himself as a kind of missionary to youth. This was why he accepted tutoring posts, and why he gave so generously to causes for the betterment of orphaned boys, shoeshine boys, hoboes, and derelicts on the Bowery. As a teacher he was hopelessly ineffective in both the Seligman and the Cardozo households, where healthy growing boys kept him perpetually cowed. They locked him in closets and tied him to chairs, and played all manner of cruel tricks on their tiny tutor. Benjamin Cardozo once said, in a remarkable example of understatement, “He did not do as successful a job for me as he did with the careers of his newsboy heroes.” And yet one thing may have rubbed off on young Ben Cardozo: Alger’s love of poetry. All his life, Benjamin Cardozo was an avid reader of poems—he occasionally tried his hand at poetry himself—and had a fascination, and tremendous respect, for the English language.

At the same time, there was no doubt that, despite any deficiencies in his education, young Ben possessed a brilliant mind—a mind that would carry him into Columbia as a freshman at the age of fifteen (he graduated at nineteen) and, with what he described as “an almost ecstatic consecration to the law,” into a career that has hardly been equaled in the history of American jurisprudence. With only two years of law school, instead of the usual three, and without even an LLB degree, he became a member of the bar, moved on to become chief judge of the court of appeals of New York State, and at last achieved the highest judicial post in the country, justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. But was it his brilliant mind alone that pushed him to these accomplishments? A great deal is known and has been written about Benjamin N. Cardozo, the great jurist, humanitarian, and towering public figure. Somewhat less is understood of the man, who was lonely, tortured, obsessed.

Despite moments of inadvertent hilarity provided by Horatio Alger, the Cardozo household grew increasingly gloomy during the years of Ben Cardozo’s youth, and a pervading air of melancholy and dissent settled upon the place. Though the Cardozo children were bound together by natural ties of love and family, the strongest bond between them seemed to be sadness. There were endless quarrels with relatives, sometimes over money or business matters, but more often over real or imagined social slights. As Ben Cardozo’s cousin Annie Nathan wrote:

As a child, I was always trying to tread a path warily through the maze of family feuds. “Was it Aunt Becky or Aunt Rachel,” I would ask myself, “who didn’t speak to Uncle John?” “Which aunt was it with whom Mama had quarreled?” These perplexing feuds always had their start in the failure of some relative to “ask after” one of the family. There were fourteen aunts and uncles—almost all with numerous progeny—so some slight, quite unintentional lapse might easily have been pardoned. But not in our family. It was the crime of crimes. It was with us as the laws of the Medes and the Persians that on meeting a relative (particularly an “in-law”) however fortuitously, however pressed for time, one must inquire meticulously into the state of health of each and every member of that particular family. Any deviation, any temporary forgetfulness, was set down as a deliberate slight, to be resented as such.

At times, it must have seemed to young Benjamin Cardozo that a terrible curse hung over his branch of the Nathan family, rather like that which afflicted the Greek House of Atreus: somehow, before he was finished, each member of the Cardozo family must be made to pay for the father’s sins. Not long after his mother’s death, an older sister, Grace, died at the age of twenty-five. That same year, Ben’s father died. That was the autumn Ben started at Columbia. Next year, Ben’s twin sister, Emily—described as “the one high-spirited member of the family”—was married, but in the family this was treated as another tragedy. The man she married, Frank Bent, was a Christian and, though Emily was the only one of the seven Cardozo children to marry, she was thereafter treated as dead. The family actually “cut *kriah*” for her—that is, they held a service for the dead for her. (To cut *kriah* is to cut a tiny snippet of one’s clothing—always in an inconspicuous place, or one easily mended—symbolic of the Biblical practice of mourners rending their garments over the deceased.) This particular family service, Benjamin Cardozo once recalled, “disgusted” him. Emily Cardozo’s name was dropped from family conversation, and her portrait, literally, was turned against the wall.

A few years later, Ben’s only brother (another had died in childhood), Allie, whom he idolized, died, also at an early age. That left Ben and two older spinster sisters, Ellen and Elizabeth—plain, shy Nell and beautiful, excitable Lizzie. Lizzie wanted to be a painter, and she studied art under

Kenneth Hayes Miller, who described her as “the end of a long line of aristocrats. She looked like a feminine edition of Dante. Eyes so dark and intense, the aquiline, aristocratic nose.” For all her beauty and the intensity of her personality, Lizzie Cardozo had very little artistic talent, which few people—including Mr. Miller—could bring themselves to tell her. She painted incessantly nonetheless, and also wrote fervid, morbid poetry full of death and loss and desolation. She suffered from a recurring back ailment which, by the time she reached maturity, kept her in almost perpetual pain. But it was clear to many that more than this was wrong with Lizzie. She had visions, hallucinatory fantasies which may have been heightened by drugs prescribed for pain, but which certainly sprang from some deeper psychosis, and when Lizzie’s “bad periods” became impossible for Nell and Ben to manage, a trained nurse, Kate Tracy, had to be hired to handle her. Miss Tracy remained Lizzie’s companion for life, and the two women retired to a little cottage in Connecticut. Was Lizzie Cardozo perhaps too highly bred? She was descended on both sides from people who had married their close relatives. Both sets of grandparents had been marriages of cousins, as had at least two sets of her great-grandparents. Was some weak and fatal strain coming to the surface, threatening to fling apart permanently the closely knit fabric of Spanish Jewish families? Was Lizzie indeed “the end of the line”? Such thoughts must have darkened the mind of Ben Cardozo as he set out with “ecstatic consecration” to be a great lawyer and jurist.

And so, at 803 Madison Avenue, where the family had moved after Albert Cardozo’s downfall, it was now just Miss Nell, eleven years older than her brother, and Ben. Their father had left a depleted estate of less than \$100,000, and much of this was required to care for the afflicted Lizzie. Young Ben, working furiously in law offices downtown, became the breadwinner. Nell kept house for him. Darkly handsome, but small and frail of physique—he was described by one of his Columbia professors as “desperately serious”—Ben buried himself in study and work from early in the morning until late at night. At Columbia he had been too young for the social life—he was a sophomore before his voice began to change—and by the time he began to practice law he had lost all taste for it. He usually brought work home with him from the office and, after a quiet dinner with Nell, he would be back at his desk until after midnight. His girl cousins

used to try to persuade him to accompany them to dances or to concerts or the theater. He always refused, using the press of work to do as an excuse. Sometimes he would break his routine with a bit of four-handed piano with Nellie of an evening, but that was all. He had, he once admitted, hesitated before deciding to go into law. He had considered studying art. But he hadn't hesitated for long, because forces from the past stronger than he were driving him to expiate his father's guilt.

Benjamin Cardozo brought a particular and individualistic "style" with him to American justice. Though he was often called a "lawyer's lawyer," with a photographic memory that could cite cases, chapter and verse, without looking them up in the lawbooks, he was also an early champion of the little man against what often seemed the giant and uncaring mechanism of urban or corporate society. For instance, in an early—1916—automobile-safety case that came before the New York State court of appeals, a man named McPherson was suing an automobile company for injuries incurred when a new car he had bought turned out to have a defective wheel. The manufacturer had argued that it was not responsible, since it had not sold the car directly to McPherson, but to a dealer. There was no proof, the company argued, that it had known of the defect—though the car had collapsed when being driven at eight miles an hour. This defense had been upheld by the lower court.

Not so, replied Judge Cardozo in his reversing opinion. He wrote: "Beyond all question, the nature of an automobile gives warning of probable danger if its construction is defective. This automobile was designed to go fifty miles an hour. Unless its wheels were sound and strong, injury was almost certain. It was as much a thing of danger as a defective engine for a railroad. The defendant knew the danger." Cardozo also pointed out that the company obviously knew, when it supplied its dealers with cars, that they were for the ultimate sale to motorists, and that any claim to the contrary was silly and "inconsequential." He added: "Precedents drawn from the days of travel by stagecoach do not fit the conditions of travel today. The principle that the danger must be imminent does not change, but the things subject to the principle do change. They are whatever the needs of life in a developing civilization require them to be."

Cardozo was also one of the first American jurists to spell out clearly that what is a legal wrong is not necessarily a moral wrong, and that this fact

must be considered in, for example, judging the crimes of the criminally insane. Cardozo was the kind of jurist who always looked for ways in which the laws, as written, were either too vague or too universal. There was the case of a cigar packer named Grieb who, under the instructions of his employer, was delivering a crate of cigars to a customer and stumbled on a staircase and fell. The accident proved fatal but, since the man had been delivering the crate after regular working hours, his employer had argued that his widow and children were not entitled to the customary death benefits under the Workmen's Compensation Act. The man was not, his employer insisted, legally employed at nighttime. This position had been upheld in the lower court.

But, said Judge Cardozo in his reversal:

Grieb's service, if it had been rendered during working hours, would have been incidental to his employment. To overturn this award, it is necessary to hold that the service ceased to be incidental because rendered after hours. That will never do. The law does not insist that an employee shall work with his eye upon the clock. Services rendered in a spirit of helpful loyalty, after closing time has come, have the same protection as the services of the drone or the laggard.... What Grieb then undertook to do with his employer's approval was just as much a part of the business as if it had been done in the noonday sun.... If such a service is not incidental to the employment within the meaning of this statute, loyalty and helpfulness have earned a poor reward.

For all the clarity of his thinking and the lucidity of his judgment, he remained an exceedingly modest man and often expressed a low opinion of himself. Once, accepting an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from a university, he described himself as "a mere plodding mediocrity." When asked what he meant by this, he said: "I say plodding mediocrity, for a mere mediocrity cannot go far, but a plodding one can go quite a distance." This was about as generous with himself as he permitted himself to be, though he once went so far as to describe himself as a "judicial evolutionist." And he remained a solitary, moody man who entertained—with sister Nell acting as his hostess—only when it seemed to him an absolutely inescapable

necessity, and who spent his leisure time reading poetry, studying law, or—for a rare diversion—studying Italian and playing a bit of gentlemanly golf.

He spent a great deal of time answering letters. Each letter he received—even as a Supreme Court justice—was personally answered by him, and in longhand. He wrote a beautifully flowing script. One of his lifelong friends was Mrs. Lafayette Goldstone and, throughout his long correspondence with her over a period of more than twenty years, the wistful, self-deprecatory spirit of melancholy pervades. When he was appointed to the New York State court of appeals, in 1914, a certain amount of time spent in Albany was required, and he always treated these “exiles,” as he called them, as though Albany were Devil’s Island. Years later, after his appointment to the United States Supreme Court, he took an apartment in Washington, and his view of life in the capital was equally dismal. From his apartment at 2101 Connecticut Avenue he wrote in a characteristic vein to Mrs. Goldstone: “The letterhead tells the story. Alas! I am homesick for the old scenes and the old faces. The apartment is beautiful, but my heart is far away.” The following year, he wrote: “I feel more than ever an exile.... [New York], the great city—election is on, and I am condemned to take no part in it. ‘Hang yourself, brave Crillon,’ said Henry IV after a great victory had been gained. ‘Hang yourself, brave Crillon, we fought at Argeres, and you were not there.’”

Of life in Washington, he wrote: “I call myself Gandhi, an ugly old saint—or at least a putative saint—to whom the faithful pay obeisance. They come here in great numbers, young and old, stupid and clever, some to stare and some to talk. Among the clever was Irwin Edman.... What a delightful youth he is!”

His great idol was Oliver Wendell Holmes, whom he replaced on the Supreme Court bench, and after a visit with Holmes at Beverly, Massachusetts, Cardozo wrote: “Holmes is a genius and a saint, enough of the mischievous devil in him not to make the sainthood burdensome, but still, I think, a saint, and surely a genius.” Yet Cardozo’s own reticence and shyness hampered him during the visit and, writing again to Mrs. Goldstone, he said: “I wish I could talk freely like you. I’m fairly paralyzed when I visit strangers whom I admire and revere. But the old man sent word to me that he entreated me to visit him, so what could I do? My friend,

Felix Frankfurter, who knows him well, drove me there from Boston, and back to my hotel. What an egocentric letter! I'm ashamed of it...."

When Holmes died, Cardozo wrote: "Holmes was great. His life work had been finished, but he remained a magnificent symbol. The world is poorer without him. I was the last person to visit him before he took to his bed."

Cardozo was capable of a certain gentle humor. Once, after a visit to New York's Metropolitan Museum, he wrote: "Almost as one enters, one is greeted by two gigantic effigies of the Pharaoh of the Exodus, a gift of the Egyptian government, brought from the Temple at Luxor and wrought by some Egyptian sculptor about 1250 B.C. If the effigies could see, they would probably surmise that New York was the place to which the Jews, driven forth from the land of Egypt, had been guided by the wise old Moses."

But the note of sadness was forever creeping in. "May all happiness be yours in your bright and sunlit dwelling," he wrote to Mrs. Goldstone. "I cling to you, says an Italian (I am airing my new learning) 'come l'edera il muro,' as the ivy to the wall. That is the way I feel about my friends as I watch the devastating years." And, a little later, from his summer home in Rye: "I am glad you like me for myself and not for my supposed greatness which, alas, is non-existent.... Whatever greatness I have is the greatness of a drudge."

As he grew older, and more celebrated, people—particularly his female relatives—kept trying to make matches for him, but to no avail. He remained steadfastly a bachelor, and increasingly devoted to and dependent upon his sister Nell. They were like mother and son, she reminding him to take his umbrella if it looked like rain, telling him to bundle up warm in case of snow. It is likely that if he had ever wanted to marry, strong-willed Nell would not have let him. Her entire life revolved around him, and she was jealous every moment they were apart. His biographer George Hellman wrote: "He knew all that he meant to her—the jealousy as well as the depth of her affection. He made allowances for the jealousy; he was grateful for the affection." To a cousin who once asked him why he denied himself the pleasures of a wife and children, Cardozo replied quickly, "I can never put Nell in second place!" And once, at a New York dinner party, a young woman seated next to the great jurist had the temerity to say to him, "Won't you tell me, Judge Cardozo, whether you were ever in love?"

He looked briefly startled, and said, “Once.” Then, adroitly, he changed the subject. He never revealed any more than that.

It is possible that Cardozo saw himself as a kind of missionary, not only to redeem the Cardozo name but also to restore prestige and authority to Sephardic Jewry in general—to help this tiny band (“We few,” he used to say) retain its place in history. Because certainly the spunk and individuality that characterized the earlier generations in America seemed to be disappearing as the world moved into the twentieth century. After two hundred fifty years, the fabric of Sephardic life seemed to be shredding, flying apart, no longer a knit thing and all of a piece. Cardozo had always been fiercely proud of his forebears, the ancestors who had fought as officers in the Revolution, who had founded banks and captained vessels, who had sat at the right hand of Presidents from Washington on down. And yet the tragic fact was that the importance—economic, political, and social—of the oldest Jewish families was diminishing. They were being eclipsed by Jews from other lands and, at the same time, the old standards were disappearing. Suddenly, in the finest and oldest families, there were suicides, divorces (his cousin, the writer Robert Nathan, had already been divorced three times), alcoholics, wastrels, and people who had to be locked away with custodians. Did Cardozo see his father’s troubles as symptomatic of a larger trouble—a trouble reflected also in his sister Emily’s marriage to a Christian, and his sister Lizzie’s unhappy state? Was the end of the line at hand for “we few”? He may have sensed this, and spent much of his life attempting to reverse the trend.

The year 1868 was a shattering one for all the Sephardim. It was the year that the splendid new Reform Temple Emanu-El opened its doors, with a cluster of the wealthiest German Jews in New York on its committees and board of directors. Not only was the new edifice splendid, and obviously expensive, and not only was it right on Fifth Avenue at Forty-third Street, far north of Nineteenth Street, where Shearith Israel then more modestly reposed (inherent in Emanu-El’s choice of site was the statement that the forties were now more fashionable than the area around Thirty-third Street), but it represented—on a national scale—a triumph for the Reform movement, which the Sephardim had so long opposed. When the temple was dedicated, the *New York Times* editorialized that Emanu-El’s congregation was “the first to stand forward before the world and proclaim

the dominion of reason over blind and bigoted faith.” The Judaism of Emanu-El was praised as “the Judaism of the heart, the Judaism which proclaims the spirit of religion as being of more importance than the letter.” The farsighted Germans behind Emanu-El were extolled for having “become one with progress.”

Immediately there was a great deal of grumbling within the Shearith Israel congregation, and it wasn’t long before a faction had formed that talked of the need for a new building and of “modernization” and “improvements” in the service. One group wanted to introduce family pews—eliminating segregated seating—and to install an organ. Another urged that the fixed prayers should be fewer in number, with less repetition, so that “in these modern, busy times,” the service would be shorter. Still another group thought that the ancient Spanish music had outlived its usefulness and meaning. By 1895, the debate had reached such a point of ill feeling and crossed purposes that a meeting of the elders of the synagogue was held.

The meeting started off stormily. Then Ben Cardozo, still a young lawyer, got to his feet. Nothing, he said, must be allowed to change the Sephardic ritual of the synagogue, the oldest in America. Its very name, meaning “Remnant of Israel,” indicated that there were values here worth clinging to at all costs. Perhaps the weight of his Nathan-Seixas-Levy-Hart ancestors added strength to his words, for he was certainly effective. After his speech, a vote was taken, and the proposed changes and updates were defeated by a count of seventy-three to seven. Thus Sephardic tradition stepped into another century of imperturbability.

He may not consciously have meant to, but as Mr. Justice Cardozo he became Sephardic Jewry’s proudest figure, restoring the old families’ oldest pride, a pride of history, of heritage, of race—which was the way *he* felt it.

Cardozo watched with dismay as his beloved Nell grew old and frail. They continued their old routine: winters in Albany, then home to New York, then to the house at Allenhurst, on the Jersey shore, for summers, and the quiet evenings of cards and four-handed piano. Then Nell became paralyzed and could no longer play. He wrote: “Our rides along Ocean Avenue have lost the point and tang that they had in former years. Sea Bright has lost its brightness.” As the summer drew to a close: “I have been worried again about Nell. She hasn’t been so well for the last week—a

slight temperature in the afternoon, a quicker pulse at times, and speech more incoherent. Dr. Woolley has visited her daily.... So the summer creeps its weary length along.”

Then an improvement: “There has been no recurrence of the alarming seizure of a fortnight ago, but I cannot tell when one may come.” And, a few weeks later: “I am sending you some snapshots of Nell that were taken a few weeks ago while she was sitting on the porch. I think she looks sweet, and remarkably well, all things considered.” But by the following summer he was despondent again. “She seems to have lost strength,” he wrote in August, 1928, “and her power of speech has not at all improved. The effect of these long silences, when once she was so full of animation, is something that I do not need to describe....” A few months later, Nell died. This woman who had been so possessive of him and ambitious for him did not live to see the capstone of his career, his elevation to the United States Supreme Court three years later. And without her the achievement seemed empty to him.

He was even reluctant to accept the appointment. To a cousin he wrote: “Indeed I don’t want to go to Washington. Please telegraph the President not to name me.” Two days later, he wrote: “I’m trying to stave off the appointment.... Most of all, I don’t want to live in utter loneliness ... away from all my relatives and friends here whom I love.” At last, he accepted the post, but with a deep sigh. And he hated Washington.

A few days after Nell’s funeral, Judge Cardozo paid a call on a cousin, Sarah Lyons, who lived in a large and somewhat disheveled apartment not far from his own now-empty house on West Seventy-fifth Street. Miss Lyons, a peppery spinster in her eighties, never at a loss for a quick opinion, admonition, or piece of her mind, and whose bombazine was always stiff with family pride (her mother was a Nathan), poured tea for them both. As they talked, some mention was inevitably made of Nell, and Judge Cardozo’s eyes misted over. “Now, Ben Cardozo,” said Miss Sarah sternly, “you’re not to cry!”

The judge answered quickly, like the dutiful little boy he had always been, “I’m not crying, Aunt Sally.”

A few years later, at his funeral, someone said, “If only his father had been strong enough, had had the grit enough, to resist Boss Tweed, Ben would have had a happy life.”

True, but then we might not have had the Supreme Court justice.

THE EMBATTLED SISTERS

If the Sephardim of New York needed more Nathans to gossip about, there were suddenly the two fighting Nathan sisters, Annie and Maud. Everyone knew that the two girls did not “get on,” and that there had been “troubles” within that branch of the Nathan family—the girls were daughters of Robert Weeks Nathan, Benjamin Nathan’s brother—but nothing had ever erupted in any sort of public way. Then, in 1933, Maud Nathan wrote and had published an autobiography called *Once Upon a Time and Today*, which, among other careful glossings-over, painted an idyllic picture of a happy girlhood in New York and, later, in Green Bay, Wisconsin. When, several years later, her sister Annie countered with her own book, called *It’s Been Fun*, her version of the Nathan story sounded like no fun at all.

Robert Weeks Nathan was a handsome and cheerful man with a fondness, in the phrase of his day, for a well-turned ankle. In her book, Annie told of how, as a little girl, she was out walking in New York one afternoon with her nurse when who should she see coming from the opposite direction but her father, with an elegantly turned-out young lady on his arm. Annie rushed up and hugged her father, who did not seem particularly pleased to see her. In fact, he actually pushed her off, and back into the nurse’s clutches. As she and the nurse proceeded, the nurse explained that the man they had met was not Annie’s father, though there was “some slight resemblance.” Annie Nathan was bewildered. Certainly she knew her own father. But the nurse was very firm, and for years Annie believed that the man she had encountered on the street that afternoon was not her parent but his exact double.

Then she told of the beautiful and mysterious Lazarus cousin whom no one in the family was supposed to “receive.” Annie’s mother, though, did secretly receive the lady, and the two whispered together over teacups. What was the scandal? Annie could never get to the bottom of it because no one would ever tell her. But it all had to do, she gathered, from “the way of life” the beautiful cousin had chosen to live.

Annie’s mother had been a Florance, an old Sephardic family from the South. Florances had first come to Charleston, South Carolina, in the eighteenth century, and from there had migrated to New Orleans and Philadelphia. The Florance men, Annie Nathan revealed in her memoir, were said to have a weakness for hard liquor. That was said to be Uncle Ted’s problem. Nonetheless, some Florances were very grand. One of Philadelphia’s noted hostesses in the nineteenth century was “Mrs. William Florance of Rittenhouse Square”—she was always so identified except at such times when she was simply “Mrs. Florance,” as though there could not be two of her elevated rank. Mrs. Florance was a formidable woman. Looking down her Rittenhouse Square dinner table one evening, she noticed a guest whose gown revealed somewhat more décolletage than Mrs. Florance thought proper. Without a word, she rose from the table, left the room, and returned a moment later with a shawl, which she draped carefully around her guest’s shoulders. “You look chilly, my dear,” she murmured, and the dinner party proceeded.

Uncle Ted was something else again, and his reputation in Philadelphia left something to be desired. He, too, had married a Nathan—Benjamin Nathan’s daughter Rosalie—but he had left her to live openly with another woman. By this woman he had gone so far as to have a daughter—or so “everybody” said. He insisted that his lady friend had been a widow, with a daughter, and that the daughter was not his. Naturally, nobody believed Ted Florance’s trumped-up explanation. When the lady friend died, the daughter—quite naturally, it seemed—went to live with her father. It can be imagined what consternation greeted the news that Ted Florance was going to marry this young woman. He was going to marry *his own daughter*. Tea tables in New York rocked with the news for weeks. Whether or not she really was his daughter will, of course, never be known, but the feathers flew so high in the Nathan and Florance families that the marriage was called off.

His wife, meanwhile, Aunt Rosalie, was not to be outdone by her husband's flamboyant ways. In the 1880's, a "mature" woman with grown children, she suddenly took off for an extended tour of Europe *with another man*. She was accused of "flying in the face of decency," but despite the criticism she continued on her travels, explaining that a man made a more useful and entertaining travel companion than another woman. It saved her no end of trouble and being "put upon," she said. The man was an oculist—he and Aunt Rosalie had first met "on a professional basis"—and, she explained, he also tended to her eye needs while they traveled. (Like Ben Nathan, she was extremely nearsighted.) It seemed, at best, a little incongruous; they were both well past middle age—"Old enough to know better," the Nathans muttered—but the arrangement continued pleasurably for both. Aunt Rosalie's oculist was with her when she died in Switzerland. She was cremated, which was a scandal in itself.

Annie Nathan's father had been a prosperous stockbroker, but he had got caught in the stock market crash of 1875 and had lost everything. It was the beginning of another tragic episode in the Nathan family. A friend, David Kelly—"a devoted admirer of my mother," Annie wrote obliquely in her book—offered Mr. Nathan the unlikely job of general passenger agent for the Green Bay and Minnesota Railroad in Green Bay, Wisconsin. It was a moment of great upheaval for the family, and its impact was not helped by the fact that when the Nathans had established themselves in a house in Green Bay, Mr. Kelly moved in with them. It was an odd ménage—Mr. Nathan seldom spoke to Mr. Kelly, and made no secret of his dislike for him, though both he and an older son worked for Kelly's railroad—and it grew even odder when Mr. Nathan began entertaining his own group of lady friends in the house. Before long, however, Mr. Nathan grew tired of the Middle West and returned to his old Wall Street haunts, leaving his wife, children, and Mr. Kelly in Green Bay.

Annette Florance Nathan was, as they said, "delicate." Feminine and woundable, she had been born in the South and raised by attentive nurses and servants, and she knew nothing of housekeeping before her marriage. (After she was married, her first maid asked her how she wished her potatoes cooked for dinner and she knew so little of cooking that she couldn't answer.) She would have inherited a share of a large fortune, but her father, an unreconstructed Southerner, cut her off without a penny for

marrying a Yankee. Though she had no business experience whatever, she hit on the idea, in Green Bay, of trying singlehandedly to recoup the family fortunes. “She had been told wonderful tales of profitable returns from running rooming houses in Chicago,” her daughter wrote, and so she set off for Chicago to acquire such an establishment. Several days later, she returned to Green Bay, ecstatic. She had met “a kindly and lovely blue-eyed woman” who had helped her find a house—a place somewhat larger than she had originally thought of buying—and her new friend had helped her spend a great deal of money on furniture and redecoration.

The Chicago venture was a disaster from the beginning. The charming blue-eyed friend had helped Mrs. Nathan buy far too large a house for far too much money, in a neighborhood unsuited for rooming houses, and the friend had also required a sizable cut of the cost of the proceedings. It wasn’t long before the house and Mrs. Nathan’s investment in it were lost, and the family staggered under another heavy blow.

It was one from which the poor lady never recovered. Her “nervousness” had already become pronounced, and now there were terrible temper tantrums followed by tears and long periods of depression. She had trouble sleeping, and doctors had prescribed both morphine and chloral for her—which she took alternately, or together, and in increasing doses—and by the time the family realized her addiction it was too late. There followed awful scenes, with the children struggling to keep the “medicine” out of their mother’s hands, with the arrival of relatives who tried to help, with—ultimately—the tortured woman’s confinement in a hospital, her children shipped back East to grandparents, and Mrs. Nathan’s death. Robert Weeks Nathan returned to his wife’s side for that. Mr. Kelly had, in the meantime, vanished.

All this—her father’s philanderings, his financial ineptitude, her mother’s relationship to Mr. Kelly—was in Annie’s book. She even pointed out the “Florance family drinking habit.” What was not explained in the book was how, out of these shambles of unhappy lives, two women as effective and successful as Annie Nathan and her sister Maud could have emerged. Strong-minded and opinionated, they were too much alike, and too competitive, to get along. But between them they managed to lift the Nathan name out of its Victorian doldrums into twentieth-century prominence.

Maud Nathan, the older of the two, became a double Nathan when, at the age of sixteen, she married a first cousin, Frederick Nathan. She was a great crusader for women's rights. She became a leading suffragist, and marched alongside such doughty women as Harriet May Mills, Mary Garrett Hay, Mrs. Clarence Mackay, and Carrie Chapman Catt. Her name is engraved on a plaque in the New York State Capitol at Albany as one of those responsible for women receiving the vote. She was also a founder of the New York Consumers' League, a welfare group devoted to improving working conditions for women in shops and factories. Though small and soft-spoken, with large dark eyes, she loved nothing better than a fight. Once she became so incensed about what she considered rude treatment by a Manhattan taxicab driver, and the subsequent handling of the matter by the police, that she wrote a stinging letter about it to Police Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt. Her letter so impressed Mr. Roosevelt that he sent for her, and she converted him to the cause of the Consumers' League by taking him on a tour of sweatshops. The future President remained an admirer for life. Once, when foot traffic was being diverted from a street where a luncheon was being given for Prince Henry of Prussia, Mrs. Nathan—on her way to a social welfare meeting—refused to be diverted, and challenged police officers to arrest her. They didn't dare, and she passed through. At one point, the list of organizations on whose boards she sat, international conferences she had attended, and delegations before which she had spoken gave her the longest biographical sketch of any woman listed in *Who's Who in America*.

Longer, even, than her sister Annie's, which was a painful thorn in Annie's side. The sisters' first important falling out was over the issue of women's suffrage. Annie Nathan, who had been the first woman in New York to ride a bicycle—in a day when that sort of thing shocked society and made the newspapers—and who seemed to stand for everything connected with progress and enlightenment for her sex, took the astonishing step of joining the antisuffragists. "She did it mostly to spite Maud," one of her cousins wrote, but whatever the reason, it was the end of peace in the family. On the occasion of one of their rare confrontations, Annie said to Maud, "How would you like your *cook* to vote?" Maud replied coolly, "He does!" Needless to say, the girls' two brothers took Annie's side, as did most men (Judge Cardozo was an important exception; he favored women's

voting). And Annie Nathan, meanwhile, had undertaken a separate battle: education for women.

“As far back as I can remember, I was filled with a passionate desire to go to college,” she wrote in her memoir. Her father took her on his knee and told her, sadly, that if she pursued this ambition she would never marry, because “Men hate intelligent wives.” Nevertheless, she enrolled in what Columbia College then called its “Collegiate Course for Women,” and, before she was twenty, was happily married to a successful doctor, Alfred Meyer. She found the “Collegiate Course” dismayingly restricted, however, devoted as it was largely to teaching women to roll hems and balance teacups, and she dropped out in 1886 without a degree, only to discover that the only other institution of higher learning for women within a reasonable distance was the Harvard Annex (a forerunner of Radcliffe), but even that did not offer a degree. There was literally no college for women in New York City, nor anywhere nearby.

So Annie Nathan Meyer set out to start her own college. She set out, on her bicycle, to solicit funds and support from people all over the city who were either indifferent or unalterably opposed to women’s colleges. She pedaled hundreds of miles up and down New York City streets, storming the fortresses of the rich and influential, demanding to be seen and listened to. Her friends and family—except her husband—immediately gave up on her, and decided that Annie and her crazy crusade were both hopeless. One of the women on whom she called was a Mrs. Wendell, the mother of a Harvard professor, who “actually wept”—so she said—“thinking of that sweet young girl wasting her *life* in the *impossible* attempt to found a woman’s college connected with Columbia.”

And yet, little by little, she began to get support for her project. One of the earliest to back her was Ella Weed, headmistress of the then fashionable Miss Annie Brown’s School on Fifth Avenue, where proper young ladies of New York society attended classes. Another enthusiastic supporter was Chauncey Depew, the wealthy clubman, and he was joined by such luminaries of the day as Richard Watson Gilder, the former editor of *Century* magazine, and Josephine Shaw Lowell. Suddenly it began to seem as though Annie Nathan Meyer on her bicycle really *was* going to start a college. Barnard College, named after a former president of Columbia (a tactic by which Annie Nathan got the support of Dr. Barnard’s widow),

received its charter in 1889, and its founder had wasted astonishingly little of her life in the effort. She was just twenty-two years old.

Though Barnard flourished and grew, it remained for years New York's only women's college, and it took New York an uncommonly long time to realize what Barnard was and what New York had. In the 1890's, Mrs. William Astor—*the* Mrs. Astor of the famous ballroom—met her friend Mrs. Duer at a party and asked after Mrs. Duer's daughter, Alice, who later would become the poet Alice Duer Miller. "I haven't seen Alice at any of the dances all winter," said Mrs. Astor. On being told that Alice was attending Barnard College, Mrs. Astor cried out, "What! That sweet young thing?" Several years later, a Barnard fund-raising group was speaking before a wealthy chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Because of the prominence of the women in the group, and the size of their pocketbooks, the Barnard ladies were certain that large contributions would be forthcoming. But, after several weeks had passed, and no gifts arrived, a call was paid on one of the Daughters. Had she been interested in Barnard's financial needs? she was asked. "Ah, yes," the lady replied, "it was so interesting. I wish I could do something, but you see there is so much to do right here in New York. I can't give to anything so far away."

Fund raising for Barnard continued to occupy much of Annie Nathan Meyer's life, and she lived to be nearly ninety. Obviously she was successful, for Barnard has grown from a handful of girls educated on a first-year budget of just over ten thousand dollars to an enrollment today of nearly two thousand women and an endowment in the tens of millions. Annie Meyer wrote:

A successful beggar must possess many conflicting qualities. She must possess a shrewd knowledge of human nature. And yet not too shrewd. It must be a shrewdness tempered and warmed by a magnificent confidence, a glorious awareness of the heights to which human nature may rise, as well as the depths to which it may fall. Obviously, the slightest tinge of cynicism plays havoc with the faith which is to move mountains. Never did I press the bell of a millionaire's home with a finger that did not tremble. Never did I stand upon the top step before a millionaire's mansion without a fervent prayer that the one I had come to see would prove to be "not at home."

Annie Nathan Meyer's only persistent failing was that she grew hysterical at funerals. When this happened, the wig she wore in later years would come flying off. Her husband would cry out, "Give her a thump! Give her a thump!" It all made Nathan family funerals something of an ordeal.

For all their separate successes, relations between the two Nathan sisters remained stormy. There were moments of good feeling between them, but those were few and of brief duration.

It seemed incongruous that these two small, compact, effective women—who happened to be sisters but who also had done so much for the common cause of women—should remain enemies, and yet they did. Toward the end of their lives, at a large reception for a welfare cause in which they both happened to be interested, the Nathan sisters showed up—separately, as usual. The two remained at the party for more than an hour before they left, separately. During the whole time, the founder of Barnard College and the great crusader for women's rights remained on opposite sides of the room, elaborately ignoring one another.

“FOUL DEEDS”

In 1928, one of the last attempts was made—publicly, at least—to have ancient Sephardic lineage stand for something: probity, dignity, authority. It involved, appropriately enough, the ancient family of de Fonseca-Brandon, and the American public was reminded—fleetingly—of the grandeur that this family could look back upon.

James de Fonseca-Brandon (1764–1843) of London was a shipping magnate of considerable proportions who owned several fleets of India merchantmen. His mansion in town contained so many “taxable lights” (a man’s house was taxed according to how many windows it had) that it became something of an eighteenth-century landmark, and an advertisement of its owner’s great wealth. On the de Fonseca side of his hyphenated family, James de Fonseca-Brandon traced his descent directly back to the illustrious de FONSECAS of Madrid, one of whom, Cardinal de Fonseca (a *Converso*, obviously) was Grand Almoner to Ferdinand and Isabella at the time of Columbus’ voyage.

The Brandon side of his genealogy was equally, if not more, illustrious. The Brandons were English, and included Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, who had been consort to Mary, Queen of France, and related to various English monarchs, including Henry VIII, “Bloody” Mary, Elizabeth I, Edward VI, and Mary, Queen of Scots. James de Fonseca-Brandon married Sarah Mendes-da Costa, an heiress whose family fortune came from West Indian plantations; she traced herself back to the first Jewish settlers in the New World, who established a colony on the island of Curaçao. When Sarah Mendes-da Costa de Fonseca-Brandon died, the

family pointed out proudly, if somewhat sorrowfully, she left her huge fortune—all of it—to “the poor of London of all denominations.”

One of *her* ancestors had, at one point, been considered the richest woman in England: Caterina Mendes-da Costa Villa-Real Mellish, called “the Belle of Bath” and celebrated in court circles as “Kitty” Mellish. Kitty Mellish was the mother of Elizabeth, Lady Galway, and a sister of Lady Suasso d’Auvergne Le Grand, and her father had been Antonio Mendes-da Costa, seventeenth-century governor of the Bank of England. Her mother, a cousin of her father’s, Dona Caterina Mendes, had been the godchild of Queen Caterina of England, the childless consort of Charles the Second. This lady, Dona Caterina, had actually been born in Britain’s royal palace, where her family lived with the prince and his consort; Dona Caterina’s father, Don Fernando Mendes, a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, had been the most famous surgeon of the seventeenth century, physician to three monarchs—King John IV of Portugal, Queen Caterina of England, and King Charles II of England. His portrait in court robes hangs—somewhat inappropriately, since he was a Marrano—in Westminster Abbey.

But by 1928 the de Fonseca-Brandon family—a number of whom had dropped the cumbersome Spanish part of the double name—despite the fact that it had become connected, in various ways, to the Hendricks family (a Brandon brother and sister married Hendricks counterparts), as well as to a number of Da Costa and de Fonseca cousins, had diminished to the point where the family consisted largely of a handful of spinster aunts and a young man named Lyman Brandon, who married and then divorced his wife, a New York lady lawyer who practiced under the name Frances Marion Brandon. It was she who put the Brandon name back under public scrutiny of a certain sort. In a lawsuit, Mrs. Brandon was claiming that she had been made the victim of a huge and nefarious swindle, one that involved not only herself but a number of her legal clients. This was what she claimed happened:

Mrs. Brandon, like some of her Nathan and Hendricks connections, had been an ardent feminist and, early in the twenties, she had been introduced to a Miss Annie Mathews, a Harlem dressmaker, who was running on a feminist platform for the office of New York county registrar. Mrs. Brandon gave liberal amounts of time and money to the Mathews campaign, which

was successful, and in the process she became acquainted with one George J. Gillespie, a religious zealot who claimed to be a saint. Mrs. Brandon soon fell under Gillespie's charismatic spell, and before long Gillespie was a regular visitor at her house. The poor woman had just lost her mother, to whom she had been devoted. Thus she claimed that "While stricken in mourning, and completely under the influence of his astounding 'saintliness,' something I had never expected to find on earth, this rare bird-of-paradise by enslaving my mind, through his religious grip on me, and by his evil council, gradually got into entire control of my every thought and act, of my gilt-edged law practice, and, what is more to the point, of my amplitudious fees!"

For months on end, Mr. Gillespie and Mrs. Brandon had met at her house, where they chanted quotations from the Bible, sang hymns—he sang "Nearer My God to Thee" in a high soprano—and prayed. He brought along others of his flock, called "angels," and she invited her friends—"Society folk," as she described them—and mass conversions to the Gillespie sect took place. In the process, Mrs. Brandon and her friends were frequently called upon to contribute cash and gifts to Gillespie and his angels, as well as to Gillespie's wife, a "wretched paralytic," who never presented herself. The Gillespians were so devoted to holiness and purity that they would not drink, smoke, swear, or even eat an egg "unless assured the hen that laid it was married." Mr. Gillespie also claimed himself to be "one of Cardinal Hayes's personal attorneys," representing himself to be "a religious man of deep piety, an exemplary Catholic living the life of a holy man of high principle, virtually a saint, withdrawn from the world and worldly interests and affairs." Mrs. Brandon began to believe that Gillespie was her "second but superior self."

Gillespie was particularly interested in one of Mrs. Brandon's clients, Miss Alice A. De Lamar, a maiden lady who had inherited a multimillion-dollar fortune from her father, Captain Raphael De Lamar, a mining magnate, whose estate Mrs. Brandon's law office managed. Presently, in his role as Frances Brandon's alter ego, Gillespie had a new "life plan" to offer her. He asked her, "What is your object in life?" And she answered, "To devote myself ultimately to the poor and helpless." Solemnly he intoned, "*God sent me to you.*" What she needed, he said, was a seat on the children's court bench, where "Your great heart, great mind, irreproachable

character, all are needed right there. There you must work as I do for the honor and glory of God. But first you must serve a brief apprenticeship doing court work for the city, to learn the ropes.” When Frances Brandon demurred, saying that she had a law practice to tend to, Gillespie said that was simply taken care of; he would take over her law practice and run it for her. Delighted, Frances Brandon agreed, and applied for the office of assistant corporation counsel for New York City, a post she was promptly given.

Not surprisingly, it wasn't too long before certain “irregularities” began to turn up in the accounts of some of the Brandon clients, particularly that of the biggest Brandon client, Alice De Lamar. Presently the irregularities seemed to amount to more than half a million dollars. When the new assistant corporation counsel attempted to get information from Gillespie, he put her off soothingly, assuring her that all was well. He, meanwhile, seemed to have made off with all her clients' files, records, and accounts, but Mrs. Brandon, still under his spell, could not believe that her “angel from Heaven” could be guilty of any wrongdoing. When her clients expressed anxiety, Mrs. Brandon attempted to put more pressure on her friend. She found him suddenly strangely hostile. In fact, when she suggested that she might have to go to higher authorities about the situation, the holy man threatened her life, saying—as she remembered it—“You're a squealer, are you? Well, one squeal and I'll have you bumped. I'll have you jobbed!”

The situation continued to worsen. After more than one meeting, over tea and sandwiches, at Gillespie's office, Frances Brandon got the distinct impression that Gillespie was trying to poison her. Some discreet research revealed that George Gillespie had been known elsewhere, and at other times, by such names as Ginger-Ale George, Brother Gillespie, and Slippery George. He nonetheless continued to exercise “complete control and mastery” over her. And so, when he offered her a final and grotesque “deal,” she immediately accepted it. He said he would return her law practice to her if she would marry him. His “paralytic” wife, he explained, had conveniently died in the meantime.

On March 15, 1925, Frances Marion Brandon formally announced her impending marriage to George Gillespie. She was, to be sure, somewhat apprehensive about the future of the union. She approached it in “fear and

trembling, amid nameless premonitions.” Mrs. Brandon did not lack for a sense of the dramatic, and she actually went so far as to purchase a black wedding gown. It was, as she saw it, “A marriage I had agreed to as *the only* way of recovering quiet possession of my records from this Gillespie, and unravelling those financial irregularities, without painful notoriety.”

But her public announcement had the inadvertent effect not only of creating notoriety but also of catching Gillespie off his guard and trapping him. Obviously he had had no intention of marrying Frances Brandon, and was simply offering marriage as a way of putting her off and keeping her out of his account books. When the announcement appeared, it created a certain stir. For one thing, he was more than twenty years her senior; he was a self-proclaimed celibate, for another. When Gillespie was approached by a newspaper reporter for a statement about the upcoming nuptials, he protested, “I am a holy man!” And then, “I do not even know the woman. What is she? Some sort of city employee? Then how would I know her? The thought of marrying her never entered my mind! If a million other women had made that announcement, I could not have been more surprised.”

Needless to say, to Frances Brandon this statement “came like a thunderclap, or rather, a roar of thunder that tore at the very core of my life.” There followed a period where she “remained as one dead for two years or more.” Then she instigated the swindle suit against Gillespie, asking \$575,000 in damages.

It was, of course, a classic and pathetic case of a susceptible and perhaps foolish woman who had been successfully duped by a confidence man. And Frances Brandon might easily have won wide popular sympathy for her predicament, if she had not chosen to inject the issue of social “class”—and alleged Sephardic superiority—into the case. While it was still pending trial, she wrote and published a pamphlet intended to place her name above reproach, and thus disassociate herself from the shady doings of the nefarious Gillespie. Titled “The Truth at Last!!” it consisted of sixteen tightly packed pages filled with shrill vituperations and fulminations, besprinkled with quotations from the Old and New Testaments, Shakespeare, and Saint Thomas a Kempis, hectic with italics and spiky with picket fences of exclamation points. But at the heart of her exercise, alas,

was the assertion that, in terms of background and breeding, George Gillespie was Frances Brandon's social inferior.

"Gillespie is Scotch," she wrote, "judging by his name, and of sordid, squalid origin, a street gamin, a ruffian; salesman of children's dresses, etc.; then a dockhand at the New York Customs House; married a creature, her father a stablehand, her aunt a cook; menials; illiterates. In line therewith, his daughter married the son of a Bronx veterinary." For all that, she wrote, "He palmed himself off as a 'Society man and philanthropist,' and then was always concealing his family connections and their record as habitual petty jobholders, this ingrate ... identified *me* ... as a despicable 'some sort of city employee.' ... Why should I, a recognized executive, with a phenomenal record of achievement, and a priceless law practice, exchange cake for crumbs, *retrogress* into the political rank and file, into a nominal public office, regardless of remuneration? For bread and butter? Hardly. My financial circumstances preclude that possibility. Then how? Through *Gillespie!*"

As for herself, she pointed out in her manifesto:

My sister, years ago, married the cousin of a beloved First Lady of the Land, our *American* equivalent for the bluest blood of Royalty. No fuss; no feathers; just unpretentiously. We are like that ... though my own blood and kin traces back through America's proudest aristocracy, those PIONEERS, who tamed the wilderness with their bare and bleeding hands; sturdy stock; backbone of America.... First Settlers back beyond the Revolution, tracing ancestry not to the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, but even back of that, to AMERICA'S FIRST SETTLER, The Founder, Sir Walter Raleigh.

As if that were not enough, she crowed: "*I wear the crimson of nobility by right of that proud name [Brandon], and wear that peerless name as a diadem of stars upon my brow: When we were very young, I married Lyman da Fonseca Brandon!*" She then proceeded to recite all her ex-husband's genealogical credentials—the Duke of Suffolk, Mary, Queen of Scots, Kitty Mellish, and all the rest.

Her pamphlet went on to quote a lengthy testimonial in her behalf from Lyman Brandon. "I know Frances Marion Brandon," her former husband wrote somewhat elliptically. "She is an Ace ... A phenomenon, a paragon

among women; one in a thousand thousand, to know her is to love, respect, honor, and cherish all womanhood as epitomized in her. Cast in heroic mold, modest, self-sacrificing ... of invincible courage ... gladly go to the scaffold for principle, for THE TRUTH ... inspiration to women ... her great soul ... glorious womanhood..." Lyman Brandon's prose sounded suspiciously like his former wife's, and he was every bit as prolix.

Finally, after a detailed recitation of Mr. Gillespie's "foul deeds," Mrs. Brandon's paper terminated with these words:

Duped? Humbugged? Hoaxed? I was. *We all were!* But CREDIT ME ALWAYS WITH THIS, THE HIGHEST FEATHER OF MY CAP: *It was I, who called Gillespie's bluff; smoked him out; treed him!* I who rendered that *supreme service* to my fellow citizens. The Artful Dodger caught at last! Another prize captured by me; or rather, a *prize capture*. But those of you who do not yet know me may ask, have I any proofs? Have I? *Have I? My turn to thunder now!*

What was it Crockett said? "*Come on down, Gillespie; you're a gone soon!*"

And as the date for the trial approached, these words turned out to be prophetic. Mr. Gillespie was indeed gone. He had vanished without a trace.

And as for Frances Brandon, poor woman, her pompous and windy pamphlet had made her a laughingstock. While she attitudinized, New York giggled. While she fumed and ranted and exhumed fifteenth-century ancestors, readers of New York newspapers hugged their sides. She had made being related to the Grand Almoner of Ferdinand and Isabella seem—simply—funny.

To the Sephardic community of New York, Mrs. Brandon's behavior was a deep affront. She was, after all, using a Sephardic connection by marriage in order to establish her integrity; a pedigree she had merely married was being tossed around and advertised for all to see. Furthermore, Brandon was now no longer her husband but only her ex-husband. It was all just another reminder of how thin the fabric of Sephardic life had grown to be. As one of the Nathans wrote to a Philadelphia cousin: "In case it isn't obvious by her behavior, this Brandon woman is *not* one of us."

But of course the feeling that there is some sort of mystical advantage in being a Sephardic Jew, or even in bearing the traces of Sephardic “blood,” has persisted, persists. In the opening paragraphs of his autobiography, the late Bernard Baruch, whose father had been a German immigrant, wrote: “My grandfather, Bernhard Baruch, whose name I bear, had an old family relic, a skull, on which was recorded the family genealogy. It appeared that the Baruchs were of a rabbinical family and of Portuguese-Spanish origin. ... Grandfather also claimed descent from Baruch the Scribe, who edited the prophecies of Jeremiah and whose name is given to one of the books of the Apocrypha.”

At the same time, the great financier admitted in a sheepish tone that was quite unlike him: “Somewhere along the line there must have been an admixture of Polish or Russian stock.”

And John L. Loeb, the present head of the banking firm Loeb, Rhoades & Company, is more ancestrally proud of his mother, the former Adeline Moses, than of his father, who founded the giant banking house. The Moseses were an old Sephardic family from the South who, though somewhat depleted from the days when they had maintained a vast plantation with slaves and cotton fields, were nonetheless disapproving when their daughter married Mr. Loeb, “an ordinary German immigrant.”

Both Messrs. Baruch and Loeb are dutifully listed in Dr. Stern’s registry of the Old Guard.

“AN ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT SORT”

Tephardim in the New World might dream of titled ancestors in plumes and crests and jeweled swords, who had been the poets, philosophers, physicians, judges, astronomers, and courtiers during Spain's most glorious moments. But there were hundreds of thousands of other Jews, also Sephardic but with less elaborate claims, who descended from Spain's Jewish tailors, cobblers, blacksmiths, and knife grinders. At the time of the Expulsion Edict, these families had not been able to afford the enormous bribes demanded by Inquisitional officers that would get them sent, along with their property, to lucrative northern ports in Holland, Belgium, and England. Being poor, they could not afford to become Marranos, who had to live by paying bribes. Being poor, they also lacked the sophistication and poise it took to lead the Marrano's double life. Finally, being poor and unsophisticated, they lacked the adaptability that would have allowed them to accept conversion.

There was nothing for these Jews but to surrender their money and their houses and escape. Some had fled to northern Africa. Others went eastward, across the Mediterranean, to Turkey, where they accepted the sultan's invitation, or to the islands of Rhodes and Marmara, or to Salonica and the Gallipoli Peninsula, areas where the Jews knew they would be well treated because these lands were still ruled by the Moslems.

There, in backwaters of history, it was as though a giant door had swung closed on these Sephardim, leaving them frozen in time. They were poor,

uneducated, living in tight little communities of their coreligionists, proud, mystical, working by day as farmers or fishermen or small trades-people, returning at night to their fires and their prayer books, and their evenings of singing *cantos* and *romanzas*, in the pure medieval tongue. As “guests” of the Moslems, they were considered a separate and autonomous people, permitted to preserve their religious and cultural habits, as well as their strange language. For they did not, as the upper-class Spanish Jews did, speak Castilian. They spoke Ladino, a Judeo-Spanish mixture which sounded like Spanish but contained many Hebrew words and expressions, and was written in Hebrew characters. In Spain, Ladino had helped them preserve the privacy of some of their business dealings. Now it simply served to isolate and insulate them further as the world passed them by.

While Reform Judaism was remaking the pattern of Jewish life, threatening to topple the traditional orthodoxy, these Jews knew nothing of it. Word of the European pogroms never reached them, nor did any kind of anti-Semitism. At the same time, they remained fiercely and proudly Spanish, and were convinced that one day they would be asked to return to Spain again. When they left Spain, the heads of families had taken the keys to their houses with them. Now the key to *la casa vieja*—the old house—was passed on from father to son, while decades turned into generations, and generations into centuries. These Jews had developed a rationale to explain why they had been expelled from Spain. It was, they decided, the Lord’s punishment. Like the Jews in the Old Testament, they were being made to suffer because they had failed to cleave sufficiently to Judaic precepts. They had been insufficiently pious, and had failed to obey every letter of every Talmudic law. And so, while Jews elsewhere were modernizing and liberalizing their attitudes, practices, and rituals, these Sephardim were moving in the opposite direction, not only toward a greater piety and a more intense mysticism, but also becoming hyper-ritualistic, more orthodox than the Orthodox, their ways all but incomprehensible to others.

In the synagogues, the women were not only seated separately from the men, but behind heavy curtains, so that they would not distract the men from their prayers. Sephardic home life in such outposts as Rhodes and Salonica became heavily centered around the dinner table, where the preparation and serving of food was a formalized adjunct of religion;

indeed, the Meal, the Bath, and the Prayer were a kind of trinity of Old World Sephardic life. Much of a mother's day was spent in her *cochina*, working at her stove preparing such traditional Spanish dishes as *paella*, *pastelitos con carne*, and *spinata con arroz* for her family. If callers dropped in, the woman of the house, no matter how poor she was, was required to urge food on them—wine and nut cookies, perhaps, or sesame seed pretzels, or eggs baked in their shells for days and days until the whites had turned honey-colored. And to refuse food when it was offered was regarded as the highest form of insult.

In these Sephardic households, it was very much a man's world. The man of the house was known as *el rey*, the king, and his sons were *los hijos del rey*, and were treated accordingly. In skullcaps and shawls, the men of the house were served their meals first, with the women waiting upon them, bringing them saucers of warm water and towels between courses so that the men and boys could wash and wipe their hands at the table. The woman might stuff the grape leaves—plucked from the inevitable grape arbor planted outside each door—but it was the man's job to go into the market to shop for meat, to find the best eggplants, tomatoes, spinach, and rice. It was also considered proper for a husband to supervise his wife's cooking procedure, to stand at her shoulder with suggestions and criticism, and periodically to sample and taste, perhaps even picking up the spoon himself to stir in a bit of grated clove or oregano if he felt it was needed. A wife would never resent this sort of treatment from a husband because every good Sephardic woman knew that the worst punishment a man could inflict upon a woman was to reject—by pushing aside his plate—food that she had prepared.

Sabbath meals particularly were surrounded by rules and rituals. All generations of a family gathered about a patriarchal table on which was spread a stiff white cloth reserved specifically for Sabbath use, and the meal proceeded with strictest formality. Everything used at the Sabbath was kept in special storage. Even Sabbath clothing was stored separately from the clothes of every day. Each item of food must be cooked in its traditional pot, served on its appointed platter, and eaten from its assigned plate. Onion could not mix with garlic, nor could meat dishes be served with fish, milk, or eggs. Even threads of different origins—linen, cotton, and silk—could not be used in the same fabrics if these were to be brought forth, or worn,

on the Sabbath. To carry anything on one's person—so much as a handkerchief—was a violation of Sabbath rules.

The Sephardic women were the custodians of the secrets of *endurcos*, the ancient folk magic the Jews had carried with them out of Spain. *Endurcos* was supposed to be white magic—used exclusively to cure the sick—and so it worked hand in hand, rather than at odds, with both orthodox medicine and orthodox religion. The ingredients of *endurcos* were, for the most part, herbs and spices—salt, garlic, clove, oregano, marjoram, honey, almonds, halvah—and its forms (chants, prayers, songs in Ladino, spells, and gestures) were traditionally in the hands of women past the age of menopause, called *tias* or “aunties.”

In an old world Sephardic community, a *tia* is a woman of considerable importance. Sometimes she is summoned to help a doctor and to coordinate her work with his. Or she may be called in when the doctor has done all he can for his patient and ordinary medicine will no longer suffice. When this happens, the *tia* must be given complete authority, and often the first thing she will do is to shoo everyone else out of the house so that she can work single-mindedly with her patient. She may begin her treatment by brewing a stiff tea of mint or marjoram, according to recipes known only to her, and there will follow a strict regimen based on diet, regular bathings of the patient, and recitals of the *tia*'s ancient incantations. A cure may take days or even months before the assorted demons, devils, and evil spirits (or *buena gente*, “good people,” as they are guardedly called) are cast out of the patient's body and the *tia*'s work is done. There is never a charge for the services of a *tia*, for hers is both an art and a gift, and she must therefore give it away.

A *tia* also may be consulted on matters less crucial than life or death. For instance, Turkish candy may be prescribed by a *tia* for an infected finger. Sugar from the table of a Rosh Hashanah festival is considered a cure for sterility in childless women. Marjoram or oregano tea will cure, according to the *tia*, both insomnia and fright. Sugar in water is the simple remedy for “crying children.” For severe cases of insomnia, tea should be placed outside the window of the victim and left there for three days, during which the victim must not touch fire. After the three days, she should rise early in the morning and drink the tea quickly before breakfast. Old people in these Sephardic communities follow this routine regularly, once a month, and

therefore have no trouble sleeping—as long as they are careful to remember that it must never be practiced when a baby who has not yet teethed is in the house. Otherwise, the evil eye will fall upon the baby. If it does, of course, it can often be dispelled by hurling cloves into the fire or tossing salt into the wind while chanting exhortations in the names of Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, and Moses.

To ward off the evil eye, bedrooms of children are strung with garlands of garlic cloves, and young people are instructed to carry garlic with them for luck. Older women carry blue and amber beads from the Holy Land, strung together on silk threads, for the same reason. For a little boy's first visit to a new household, it is important that he carry with him something sweet—an almond cookie, perhaps—along with something silver in his pocket, if the visit is to be a success. And so it has gone, for centuries, in an endlessly complex pattern of ritual, tradition, mystery, and magic. In the 1960's, for example, the State of Israel inaugurated "Operation Magic Carpet," which was designed to fly Sephardic Jews to Israel out of Yemen and North Africa. But the Jews refused to fly. The situation had reached an impasse until someone recalled the words from Isaiah: "I will bear you on the wings of eagles." Thus reassured, the Jews consented to board the aircraft.

At the same time, these Sephardic Jews were fiercely independent, proud to the point of crustiness, disdainful of Christians and the "fairy tales" of Christianity, filled with a sense of heightened religiosity and superior purpose.

In the semifeudal world of the Ottoman Empire, this "lost" Sephardic life could continue uninterrupted, unchanged, its tribalistic injunctions and habits passed on from generation to generation. The home was a kind of shrine, and for a son to leave his parents and venture out into the world beyond was the worst sort of transgression. It was possible to believe that nothing could disrupt these changeless ways. In the early 1900's a handful of adventurous youths from Greece and Turkey came to the United States, and wrote home to friends and relatives with tales that were scarcely to be credited—of Jewish millionaires with automobiles and yachts and mansions, who headed banks and corporations. A trickle of emigration began. With the outbreak of World War I, the trickle increased to a stream of considerable proportions. Then, at the end of the war, the revolution in

Turkey marked the end of an era. Jews swarmed out of the Near East and the Levant by the tens of thousands, and these were presently joined by Jews from northern Africa. In New York, they looked for Sephardic synagogues and found elegant establishments that were the oldest synagogues in America, still controlled by an aristocratic if somewhat diminished Jewish Establishment. Because they felt entitled to, these Jews curled up on blankets and bedrolls in the corners of the synagogues until they could find shelter, and the effect upon the existing community was cataclysmic. It was a confrontation, some 450 years later, of two streams—two social classes, really—of Sephardim, and the two groups encountered each other with the impact of a collision. Here were these Greek- and Turkish-looking people (with skins darkened from generations in the Mediterranean sun, plus a certain amount of intermarriage) claiming to be cousins of the Lazaruses, Cardozos, Nathans, Seixases, and Levys. These were people who were poor, ignorant, superstitious, who practiced an exotic form of Judaism no one comprehended, who spoke a language that sounded “worse than Yiddish,” some of whom—the Jews of North Africa, for instance—had actually lived in caves.

To the old American Sephardim—Boston Brahmin-like, entertaining their little circles of friends and relatives at tea parties, over teacups of fragile porcelain, with antique silver spoons, under darkening family portraits of Revolutionary ancestors in powdered wigs and lacy collars—the newcomers were like primitives from another planet. No one knew what to make of them. They were, plainly and simply, an embarrassment to families grown accustomed to thinking of themselves as the grandest people in America.

Vainly the rabbis of the community at large tried to explain these Oriental strangers to their congregations, as well as to explain the existing congregation—its mood and texture—to the strangers. It was no use. One sermon of the period even went so far as to point out that food cooked in oil is no less nourishing than food cooked in butter or vegetable shortening—for the newly arrived Sephardim continued to cook in olive oil, even to spread it on their bread, a practice which to other Jews seemed barbarous. The Sephardic communities were split even further as the old-timers pointed out—with certain accuracy—that they were descended from Spain’s Jewish gentry, while the newcomers descended from the riffraff.

The Levantine emigration of the twentieth century also changed the traditional locations of Sephardic communities. Up to then, Sephardic congregations existed primarily in the older eastern cities—Newport, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, Savannah. Many of the new arrivals settled in New York, giving New York today the largest Sephardic population of any American city. But many others headed westward. Many Greek Jews were fishermen, and they were attracted to the fish markets of cities such as Portland and Seattle. Others headed for southern California. Today, the second-largest Sephardic congregation is in Los Angeles. Seattle, where the Jewish community of Rhodes has transplanted itself almost intact, is third.

In the United States, the Near Eastern Sephardim made a determined effort to keep to their old cloistered ways, to cling to the comforts of ritual and the mysteries of *endurcos*, and the tight family structures they had enjoyed for centuries. But their removal from New York's Lower East Side soon after their arrival, the prevailing laws of compulsory education, and their children's association in schools and on playgrounds not only with other Jews but with people of other ethnic backgrounds had an inevitable effect, and a familiar process of Americanization began rather rapidly. The edges of old distinctions began to fade and blur. The Sephardim have staunchly retained their special ritual, songs, and prayers, but old world embellishments have been steadily disappearing. Only a few old people understand the rites of *endurcos* now, and even the treasured key to *la casa vieja* has become a charming anachronism. These Jews no longer seriously consider returning to a golden age of Spain.

Probably the greatest loss has been the Ladino. It was always an amorphous, uncodified tongue, written—like Hebrew—from right to left, and in characters similar to (but not exactly like) Hebrew, and learning to speak it was always like learning to play a musical instrument by ear. Spoken Ladino ignores all rules of grammar and of spelling, and written Ladino simply overlooks them. A writer in Ladino can employ the grammatical rules, or conventions, of any Western language he chooses—French, Spanish, Italian, or even English. Ladino words even pop up oddly in Hebrew texts, as happened when an American professor of Hebrew at the University of California found the word *empanada*, written in Hebrew characters, when reading the *Shulhan Aruk* of Karo. He could find *empanada* in no Hebrew dictionary. He eventually discovered that an

empanada is a dish prepared by the Sephardic Jews of Salonica, a casserole of chopped meat and fish baked with a layer of pie crust on the top. In Spanish dictionaries, *empanada* is defined as a meat pie.

The new settlers from the Near East quickly began introducing English words and American expressions into the Ladino, thus making the language even harder to decode. One of the strangest examples of this sort of thing is the Ladino verb *abetchar*, meaning “to bet,” which came directly from the Americanism “I betcha.” Expressions came into being such as *Quieres abetchar?* meaning “You want to bet?” and *Yo te abetcho*, meaning “I bet you.” The verb “to park” became, in new Ladino, *parkear*, and the verb “to drive” was *drivear*. Therefore, *Esta driveandro el caro* translated as “He is driving the car,” and “He is parking the car” was *Esta parkeando el caro*.

Thus undermined by grotesque intrusions from the prevailing language, and gradually forgotten by children when they entered English-speaking schools, Ladino, lacking any newspapers or even a dictionary, has become an exotic language as rare as the whooping crane, preserved only in the memories of a few rabbis and teachers. No doubt in a few more generations it will all but have disappeared.

The Levantine Sephardim who came to America in important numbers in the 1920's and 1930's may have been poor and uneducated and believers in the evil eye. But, like other immigrants of other eras, they have largely succeeded in pulling themselves out of poverty and educating themselves out of ignorance and parochialism, and on the whole they can claim as good a record in the United States as any other group. In Los Angeles, several dark-skinned Sephardim became shoeshine men. In a few years, a shoeshine man had a shoe repair shop and, a few years later, he had a chain. In Seattle, a fisherman from Greece became a canner of fish, and by the second generation his cannery became a large factory. By the time these Sephardim had begun sending their sons and daughters to American colleges and universities, whole new sets of American middle-class values had been accepted. Although it was still considered anathema to marry a Christian, it was no longer a disgrace for one's daughter to marry a *tedesco*—a German—particularly if he was rich. When this happened not long ago a Sephardic mother commented tellingly, “Well, at least he's an American, and at least he's not black.”

The impact on the old congregations in the older cities—Shearith Israel in New York, Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia—was, in the meantime, lasting. The two Sephardic strains enjoyed a truce that was, at best, uneasy. Annie Nathan Meyer was somewhat ruffled when a New York society woman suddenly said to her, “You speak such beautiful English! How long is it since your parents came to America?” She immediately brought out miniature portraits of the Colonial ancestors on both sides of the family. Of one lace-capped great-grandmother, Mrs. Meyer said impishly, “She looks rather like Martha Washington, doesn’t she?” When her visitor, confused, said, “Oh, but I thought you were Jewish,” Mrs. Meyer waved her hand and said, “These people are an altogether different sort.”

And when Shearith Israel’s great rabbi David de Sola Pool approached a lady of his congregation and asked her why, when for years he had seen her at Friday evening services, he now saw her no more than twice a year, at the high holy days, the woman looked wistful and said, “It isn’t the same. I look around in the synagogue now, and I see nothing but strangers.”

SMALL GESTURES ... AND A HUSH AT CHATHAM SQUARE

On December 17, 1968, readers of the *New York Times* may have encountered a small item which could have struck them as ironic, or mystifying. The story was datelined Madrid, and began:

Four hundred and seventy-six years after King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella ordered the Jews expelled from Spain, the Spanish Government declared tonight that the order was void.

In other words, that fateful edict beginning with the words “It seems that much harm is done to Christians by the community or conversation they have held and hold with Jews ...” which had had such a shattering effect on Spanish Jewry, and on the history of Spain itself, was at last nullified. Judaism was legal in Spain once more. In practice, the Spanish Constitution of 1869, which had proclaimed religious tolerance in general terms, was considered to have superseded the Catholic monarchs’ order. But Spain’s Jewish community, numbering about eight thousand people, had long been seeking an explicit revocation of the Expulsion Edict itself. It had taken the government of Generalissimo Francisco Franco to bring this about.

Generalissimo Franco himself has always been friendly in his treatment of Spain’s Jews. In the 1930’s, he issued an “invitation” to Jews, advertising in the Jewish press, asking the Jews to return to Spain. A few families actually did come back. During World War II, Franco embarked on an emphatic campaign to rescue Jews from Hitler’s pogroms, and he has been

personally credited with saving as many as sixty thousand Jewish lives. One little-known incident of that war is that on January 8, 1944, Franco made a personal telephone call to Adolf Hitler concerning the fate of Jewish prisoners at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Franco demanded that the prisoners, many of whom were Sephardim from Greece, be released. Hitler complied, and 1,242 Jews were sent to safety in Spain. Franco went to the Spanish border personally to meet and escort these refugees into his country. When informed that the Germans had confiscated all the Jews' money and possessions, Franco placed a second call to Hitler. The result was that the Jews' property was sent after them.

Why was the Spanish leader—in so many other ways sympathetic to Nazi policies—so opposed to Hitler in the matter of anti-Semitism? Historians of the war have never been sure, and Franco has, typically, never explained. But it may have had something to do with the strong possibility that Franco himself is of Marrano descent, as so many other Spaniards are. Franco is a common Sephardic name, particularly among Sephardim from the island of Rhodes, and it all may mean that El Caudillo is a distant connection of the beautiful Tory Franks sisters of Philadelphia. It may also explain Franco's refusal to accede to Hitler's attempts to come into Spain: perhaps he feared that he himself could become a victim of the Führer's policies.

During the years of Arab-Israeli warfare, Franco's government has continued to help Jews in Arab countries to escape persecution. It has taken such steps as to issue them Spanish passports, thereby making them honorary Sephardic Jews, as it were.

When the announcement that the Expulsion Edict was at last void was made to the Jewish congregation of Madrid, the *Times* report continued, it caused "a profound stir," and it came simultaneously with another event of vast symbolic importance—the opening of the first synagogue to be built in Spain in six hundred years. Ever since Inquisitional days, Jews had been meeting for worship in the secrecy of apartments and private houses, behind closed shutters and drawn curtains. Even under the relatively benevolent Franco regime, Jews had been too unsure of their position to risk erecting a permanent public building. At the opening ceremonies, nineteen men in top hats and prayer shawls filed into the new synagogue bearing velvet-encased sacred scrolls topped by silver bells. Dr. Solomon Gaon, grand rabbi of the

Sephardic communities of Great Britain, who is considered the world's leading Sephardic figure, flew to Madrid for the occasion; he stood in the white marble and wood hall and declared: "We witness a historic moment, when past and present meet. The most brilliant history of our people in the Diaspora was written in Spain. May this mean the beginning of a new time of moral and spiritual progress for all the people of this land."

In the United States, where some 100,000 Spanish and Portuguese Jews have now settled like so many birds after a long flight, the news of a new synagogue in Madrid was of less significance. Though the occasion was officially celebrated with prayers of thanksgiving, word that Ferdinand and Isabella's Expulsion Edict had finally been invalidated met privately with a kind of grim amusement. The reaction was: "It's about time."

In New York's Shearith Israel congregation, a strong feeling continues that here is something precious that must, at all costs, be preserved. Though the congregation is splintered and factionalized, split down the middle between the Old Guard and Levantine newcomers, and further cast into disagreement over the choice of an Ashkenazy (of all things), Dr. Louis C. Gerstein, as head rabbi (a tradition-minded faction wanted London's Dr. Gaon, a Spaniard), and what is felt to be a continuing Germanization of American Jewish life,* today's members of the Jewish First Families see themselves as keepers of a flame, preservers of something that was once of great importance—to history and to the human spirit—and is still worth remembering.

Most members of the Old Guard families today are not particularly pious, and make merely token observances of the Sabbath and the other holy days. Hendrickses, Lazaruses, Cardozos, and Nathans of the 1970's do not, for the most part, keep kosher households, nor have they for several generations. What they have undergone, over the long centuries, has been a peculiarly American phenomenon. In an aura of religious tolerance and, in the case of the Old Guard, social acceptance, their early need for their religion seems to have diminished considerably. Perhaps religion flourishes strongest, and its forms have more fierce importance, when it is prohibited or proscribed. One effect of the Inquisition was the opposite of its intent: it made Spain's Jews more determined to be Jews. In the new world, with

pressures against Jews gradually diminishing, this determination has diminished also.

What has happened is that reverence for the past has replaced religious conviction. The old Sephardic families today often appear to worship history more than a Judaic God. The old portraits and the lacy family trees, the escutcheons and coats of arms, have become their testaments and prayer books. The lists of great-grandparents' birthdays in the frontispiece of the family Bible seem to have more meaning than the text within. Even the insistence of the Sephardim on retaining the orthodox form of worship—against the trend toward modernization and Americanization that has been marked among Jewry all over the country—seems a gesture of nostalgic sentiment, a gesture in deference to the past, more than one of pure religiosity. After all, the past has placed these “few of us”—now all so thoroughly interrelated—in a position in America that is particular, peculiar, unique.

In 1897, when Shearith Israel finally got around to moving its congregation uptown into a handsome new building, there was no possibility that the move would be hailed as an attempt “to become one with progress.” Instead, the building was an attempt to become one with the past. Within the walls of the larger synagogue there stands a second, much smaller synagogue—an exact replica of the first synagogue in America as it stood on New York's Mill Street three hundred and more years ago. Step into the “little synagogue,” and you step not only into old New York but further back, into medieval Spain. On the wall, an old Spanish calendar marks off the hour, day, and week with the letters *H*, *D*, and *S*—for *hora*, *dia*, *semana*. The heavy brass candlesticks may have come from Spain also. The Sabbath lamp was the gift of the family of Haym Salomon. The tin bells were made by the colonists around 1694, before they had silver. The scrolls within the Ark are tattered and stained from water and blood. During the Revolution, a drunken British soldier fired on the reader in the synagogue; they are his bloodstains. Later, a second drunken soldier threw the scrolls in the mud. (Both offenders, it is recorded, were court-martialed by the British.)

Outside, in the synagogue proper, the seating is of course segregated. The beautiful music of the Sephardic service—another strong emotional bulwark of the congregation—traces back to old Spanish folk songs. Only a

few changes have occurred over the centuries. Three hundred years ago, the official language of the synagogue was Portuguese. In 1728, however, the congregation revised its “wholesome Rules and Restrictions,” and resolved that “the Parnaz shall be obliged twice a year to cause these articles to be read in the Sinagog both in Portugues [*sic*] and English.”

A prayer for the government, then part of the ritual, also had to undergo revision, for obvious reasons. The original prayer blessed:

Sua Real Magestade nosso Senhor Rey Jorge o Segundo, as suas Reales Atezas Jorge Principe de Veles, a Princesa Douger de Veles, o Duque & as Princesas & toda a Real Familia, a sua Excellencia o Honrado Senhor Governor y todos os Senhores de sea Concelbo, o Magistrado desta Cidade de New York e todos os seos Deredores ...

Blessings are no longer offered to “His Royal Majesty, our Sovereign George the Second, their Royal Highnesses George Prince of Wales, the Dowager Princess of Wales, the Duke and Princesses and all the Royal Family, his Excellency the Governor and all the gentlemen of his Council, the Mayor of the City of New York and all its environs.” Otherwise, nothing has changed.

Shearith Israel stands sedately at the corner of Seventieth Street and Central Park West. Rather pointedly, Shearith Israel appears to have chosen an address on the older, homier West Side, rather than on grander, flashier Fifth Avenue. Shearith Israel faces almost directly across the park toward the new Temple Emanu-El in an attitude of reproach.

Once a year, on Memorial Day, members of Shearith Israel meet at the synagogue for breakfast, and then proceed downtown to pay commemorative visits to the graves of early American ancestors in the oldest Jewish cemeteries in America. In all, three cemeteries are visited: the tiny one at Chatham Square, the even tinier triangular cemetery on West Eleventh Street in Greenwich Village, and the somewhat larger one on West Twenty-third Street, not far from the site of Benjamin Nathan’s murder. All are Spanish and Portuguese cemeteries, through the Twenty-first Street enclosure contains the grave of one of New York’s Presbyterian

Cadwaladers, who must have done something very scandalous indeed to have been placed there in alien corn.

The most important of the three is the Chatham Square Cemetery, for it is the oldest. The earliest grave there dates 1683, just one year after the land was purchased. Chatham Square Cemetery is a hushed and peaceful place, just a bit removed from the dither of Chinatown nearby, and the ground is covered with sturdy green ivy, graveled walks between the old stones, shaded by the lacy branches of three ailanthus trees. Not all the inscriptions are legible now. The cemetery was once six times as large, but the city has intruded upon it, pressed in on it, squeezed it and narrowed it to such an extent that the distinct impression is left that here remain only the doughtiest of that early, doughty breed. There are Gomezes, Lopezes, Seixases, de Lucenas, Harts, Peixottos, Lazaruses—a number of them slain Revolutionary soldiers—and a young doctor who had worked during one of New York's periodic yellow fever epidemics, and whose inscription reads:

IN MEMORY OF WALTER J. JUDAH,
STUDENT OF PHYSIC, WHO WORN DOWN
BY HIS EXERTIONS TO ALLEVIATE THE SUFFERINGS
OF HIS FELLOW CITIZENS, IN THAT DREADFUL CONTAGION
THAT VISITED THE CITY OF NEW YORK IN 1798 FELL
A VICTIM IN THE CAUSE OF HUMANITY ...
THE 15TH OF SEPT. 1798 AT 20 YEARS 5 MONTHS AND 11 DAYS

At the Memorial Day ceremonies, a brief tribute is read over each grave, and then a small American flag is placed on it by one of the deceased's living descendants. For all the simplicity of this service, a distinct understanding is generated of the Jews' belief that a cemetery is a *beth hayyim*, a house of the living, that these Americans are not dead but with us still, that a man's ancestors are arrayed behind him in the past, each generation looking over the shoulders of the generation that follows, in endless continuity.

At a recent service, thirty-four persons were counted.

The Jewish First Families honor the past in other ways, large and small. Several years ago, the family of Harold L. Lewis, who are collateral descendants of Commodore Uriah Phillips Levy, became concerned about

the way their ancestor and his relationship with Monticello were being represented in history books. The “official” text, for instance, which is on sale at the gift shop at Monticello, makes this typical reference to Uriah: “Within the year [of Jefferson’s death] Monticello was sold to liquidate the debts of the estate. Later the property was purchased by Uriah Levy for \$2,500! ... Almost one hundred years has passed since the death of Thomas Jefferson, and the mansion has suffered from the neglect of the many occupants who had neither the funds nor the interest to preserve the historic building.” No mention is made of the extensive restorations that Uriah Levy made during the many years when he was the mansion’s only occupant. Another text, “Monticello,” by Gene and Clare Gurney, contains the following reference:

Mr. Levy did not live at Monticello. Instead he leased it to a succession of farmers who brought Jefferson’s beautiful house close to ruin. They used the once-lovely drawing room to store grain. Refuse was allowed to collect on the portico steps until a horse and wagon could be driven up to the drawing room door. Unused outbuildings were torn down and no repairs were made anywhere on the estate.

Belatedly realizing that something should be done to save Monticello, Mr. Levy willed it to the government when he died in 1862. His heirs successfully contested the will, and one of them, Jefferson M. Levy, did make an effort to repair some of the damage that had been done to the historic house, but he lacked the resources to carry out such a tremendous task.

Over the years a number of prominent people recommended that the government buy and restore Monticello as a memorial to the third President. Nothing was done, however, and Monticello continued to deteriorate.

This account does a great disservice to both Uriah and his nephew. Jefferson Levy had no lack of “resources,” and was an extremely rich man who spent enormous sums restoring and refurbishing Monticello. He made repeated trips to Europe in search of the mansion’s original furniture, wallpapers, and rugs, and when the originals were unobtainable he had costly copies made from whatever sketches could be found. Under Jefferson

Levy's stewardship, Monticello became one of the great showplaces of the early twentieth century—it attained, in fact, the sort of elegance and grandeur that Thomas Jefferson had conceived for it, but had never lived to see. The house was the scene of many lavish parties and entertainments. Jeff Levy's sister, Mrs. Amelia Von Mayhoff, acted as his hostess, a role she clearly relished, and a long list of dignitaries from official and diplomatic Washington, as well as titled folk from Europe, were frequent guests at Monticello. Levy nieces alive today remember being ushered into the great drawing room, where a typically opulent reception was going on, the guest list including the President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt. And yet, for some reason, no history book has yet taken note of any of this.

Today, most of the guides at Monticello look blank when any mention is made of Uriah Phillips Levy, and only a few have the vaguest knowledge of Monticello's associations with the Levy name. None of the guides, on a recent visit, was aware that Uriah's mother, Rachel Levy, is buried on the grounds. Her grave is in a small enclosed plot not far from the gift shop.

Several years ago, Harold Lewis, whose wife was one of Jefferson Levy's nieces, was astonished and outraged on a visit to Monticello to discover a bronze plaque which stated simply that a certain Uriah Levy had at one point bought the estate for \$2,500 and later sold it for \$500,000. The implications of Jewish greed and sharp practice seemed quite clear. After a great deal of difficulty and much correspondence with Monticello's trustees, Mr. Lewis was successful in having the plaque reworded.

Others have been equally dutiful to the past. In Manhattan in the late 1960's, one of the historic areas threatened by real estate developers was a triangular piece of land between East Ninth and Eleventh streets and Second and Third avenues, through which narrow Stuyvesant Street passes diagonally. Within this area are the old Church of Saint Mark's in-the-Bowery, dating from 1799, and thirty-three neighboring houses from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This is the site of the bouwerie—or farm—of Governor Peter Stuyvesant, and in the churchyard of Saint Mark's are buried eight generations of Stuyvesants, along with the Dutch governor himself. Early in 1969, New York City's Landmarks Preservation Commission announced that it had succeeded in having the district declared a historic one, meaning that no exterior changes to the church, the

churchyard, or any of the buildings can be made without the approval of the commission. (There has since been a controversial decision to let the old graveyard, which was being desecrated by vandals, double as a children's playground.)

The announcement of the designation of the area, which should in any case preserve it for some time to come, was made by Harmon Hendricks Goldstone, a New York architect, and chairman of the Landmarks Commission. The announcement made much of Peter Stuyvesant's grave, but overlooked the fact that Mr. Goldstone is himself a direct descendant of Abraham de Lucena, one of the first Jews to arrive in Manhattan in the year of the Twenty-Three.

It gives Mr. Goldstone a certain amount of quiet pleasure, and a feeling of the right thing done, to know that he has been at least partly responsible for protecting the final resting place of the choleric little governor who gave his ancestors such a shabby welcome all those hundreds of years ago.

Mr. Goldstone's mother, Mrs. Lafayette Goldstone, is, of course, as bewilderingly connected as her son to all the old families—Hendricks, Tobias, Levy, Seixas, Hart, Nathan, and the rest. It is she who was such a faithful correspondent, through the years, of Mr. Justice Cardozo, and she achieved considerable acclaim as a poet, writing under the name May Lewis, a combination of her middle and maiden names. (She is a sister of the above-mentioned Harold Lewis.) She became, at one point, an ardent Zionist, at a time when that was not a popular stance among upper-class Jews.

During the Hitler era, at the point when the Third Reich decreed that Jews must wear the badge of the yellow star, as their Inquisitional predecessors had done, Rabbi David de Sola Pool of Shearith Israel had a yellow star stitched to his vestments to symbolize what his people in Europe were suffering. The sight of the New York rabbi wearing the star stirred Mrs. Goldstone deeply, and moved her to write what she considers her most important poem:

*O earliest morning stars that sang together,
And choruses of night that answered them,
The ancient stars, the sacred, the resplendent,
The shepherds' star*

That rose on Bethlehem;

*And even those small emblems that men make,
The stars of knighthood, bright for honor's sake;
The little service stars that shall burn through
Their hours of grief and pride,
And liberty's white spangled stars that ride
Valiant forever on their field of blue.*

*Is this the symbol that the brutal hand,
The blundering will to harm, the vicious hate,
Has wrought into a badge, a mark to brand?
Wear it, O Jew, upon your helpless arm;
Your race is worthy such insignia;
Be proud, be grateful it is not your fate
To bear a swastika.*

Mrs. Goldstone has already celebrated her ninety-second birthday. She lives comfortably in a large Park Avenue apartment with a view of Central Park, surrounded by fine old furniture, silver, china, and some splendid family portraits, several by her ancestor Jacob Hart Lazarus, the Astor family portraitist. She doesn't get out as often as she used to but still entertains regularly at little teas, with a merry fire going in the fireplace, and she goes regularly to the synagogue. She has watched many of her relatives drift away from their ancient faith, and takes it philosophically, but was saddened that a relative who had married a non-Jew now considers herself—from a religious standpoint—"nothing." In the family, both Jewish and Christian holidays are celebrated.

She is still an energetic lady. Not long ago, walking in the park, she avoided ruining a new pair of shoes by taking them off and running barefoot to the nearest exit to escape a downpour. A favorite taxi driver, who serves as a kind of chauffeur, taking her on errands and visits around the city, asked her the other day the secret of her good health, spirits, and great age. Stepping out of the cab, she answered, "I believe in God."

* Despite all sorts of socially discriminatory measures, snubs and countersnubs. In New York, for instance, the elite German-Jewish men's club, the Harmonie, would not admit Sephardic members. In

retaliation, the Sephardic Beach Point Club in suburban Westchester would take no Germans. This condition persisted well into the twentieth century.

Image Gallery



Mr. Aaron Lopez, the affluent Newport Merchant.



JUDAH TOURO

Judah Touro, philanthropist and “a strange man,” according to contemporaries.



Newport's famed Touro Synagogue.



Phila Franks, who, to her mother's pain, married General Oliver Delancey.



The beautiful and poetic Rebecca Gratz.



The house that Daniel Gomez built, as it stands today, near Newburgh, NY.



Chicago's monument to Haym Salomon, Revolutionary financier.



Barnard College founder Annie Nathan Meyer.



Maude Nathan Nathan (she married a cousin).

SOURCES

- Abrahams, Israel. *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1896.
- Barrett, Walter. *Old Merchants of New York City*. New York: Carleton, 1870.
- Baruch, Bernard M. *Baruch: My Own Story*. New York: Holt, 1957.
- Byars, William Vincent. *B. and M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754–1798*. Jefferson City, Mo.: Hugh Stephens Printing Co., 1916.
- Dimont, Max I. *Jews, God, and History*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962.
- Dubin, Maxwell H. *Jews in American History*. Los Angeles: privately printed and circulated, 1930.
- Elzas, Barnett A. *The Jews of South Carolina*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1905.
- Fein, Isaac M. "Baltimore Jews During the Civil War." *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*. Vol. LI No. 2, December 1961.
- Fitzpatrick, Donovan, and Saphire, Saul. *Navy Maverick: Uriah Phillips Levy*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1963.
- Friedman, Lee M. *Early American Jews*. Cambridge: Harvard, 1934.
- . "Boston in American Jewish History." *Publication of the American Jewish Historical Society*. Vol. XLII No. 4, June 1953.
- Handlin, Oscar. *Adventure in Freedom*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954.
- Hellman, Geoffrey T. "Collection." *The New Yorker*, June 12, 1965.
- Hellman, George S. *Benjamin N. Cardozo*. New York: Whittlesey House, 1940.
- Herahkowitz, Leo, and Meyer, Isidore S., eds. *The Lee Max Friedman Collection of American Jewish Colonial Correspondence*. Waltham, Mass.: American Jewish Historical Society, 1968.

- Hühner, Leon. *Jews in America after the American Revolution*. New York: Gertz Brothers, 1959.
- . *The Life of Judah Touro*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1946.
- Kayserling, Meyer. *Christopher Columbus and the Participation of the Jews in the Spanish and Portuguese Discoveries*. New York: Longmans, Green, 1894.
- Korn, Bertram Wallace. *The Early Jews of New Orleans*. Waltham, Mass.: American Jewish Historical Society, 1969.
- Kraus, Walter Max. "The Arrival of the *Saint Charles*." *The Saint Charles*. Vol. I No. 1, January 1935.
- Langdon-Davies, John. *Carlos: The King Who Would Not Die*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963.
- London, Hannah R. *Portraits of Jews*. New York: William Edwin Rudge, 1927.
- . *Shades of My Forefathers*. Springfield, Mass.: Pond-Ekberg, 1941.
- Madariaga, Salvador De. *Christopher Columbus*. New York: Macmillan, 1940.
- Maduro, J. M. L. "A Genealogical Note on the Pimentel, Lopez, Sasportas and Rivera Families." *Publication of the American Jewish Historical Society*. Vol. XLII No. 3, March 1953.
- Marcus, Jacob Eader. *Early American Jewry*. 2 Vol. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1953.
- Mars, David. "Justice Benjamin Nathan Cardozo: His Life and Character." *Publication of the American Jewish Historical Society*. Vol. XLIX No. 1, September 1959.
- Meyer, Annie Nathan. *Barnard Beginnings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1935.
- . *It's Been Fun*. New York: Henry Schuman, 1951.
- Michener, James A. *Iberia*. New York: Random House, 1968.
- Nathan, Maud. *Once Upon a Time and Today*. New York: Q. P. Putnam's Sons, 1933.
- Pearson, Edmund L. *Studies in Murder*. New York: Macmillan, 1924.
- Pool, David de Sola. *An Old Faith in the New World: Portrait of Shearith Israel*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1955.

- . *Portraits Etched in Stone*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1952.
- Pritchett, V. S. *The Spanish Temper*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954.
- Roth, Cecil. *A History of the Marranos*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1932.
- . “On Sephardic Jewry.” *In the Dispersion*. Spring 1966.
- Sachar, Abram Leon. *A History of the Jews*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930.
- Stern, Malcolm H. *Americans of Jewish Descent*. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1960.
- Van Doren, Carl. *Secret History of the American Revolution*. New York: Viking, 1941.
- Wiznitzer, Arnold. “The Exodus from Brazil and Arrival in New Amsterdam of the Jewish Pilgrim Fathers, 1654.” *Publication of the Jewish Historical Society*. Vol. XLIV No. 2, December 1954.
- Wouk, Herman. *This Is My God*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959.

INDEX

- Aaron (family), [2](#)
Abdulrahman III, Caliph, [31](#)
Abdy, Sir Robert Edward Henry, [176](#)
Aberdare, Henry Campbell Bruce, Lord, [176](#)
Abravanel (family), [47](#)
Abravanel, Don Isaac, [45](#), [47](#)
Adams, H. P., [46](#)
Adams, Samuel, [147](#)
Africa, northern: Sephardim, [50](#), [51](#), [331](#), [335](#), [336](#), [337](#)
Alexander VI, Pope, [82](#)
Alfonso X (Alfonso the Wise; Alfonso the Learned), King, [31](#)
Alger, Horatio, [296–97](#)
Algonquin Indians, [94–95](#)
Alpert (family), [25](#)
Alport (family), [25](#)
Amador de los Kios, José Fernández, [25](#)
American Jewish Historical Society, [17](#)
Amsterdam: Sephardim, [19](#), [50](#), [51](#)
Andalusia: Moors, [32](#)
 Sephardim, [32](#), [43](#), [87](#)
André, Maj. John, [167–68](#)
Andrews, Charles; [207](#)
anti-Semitism, *see* Jews, anti-Semitism
Arnott, Nina Mapleson, *see* Nathan, Mrs. Washington
Ashkenazim, [8](#), [55n](#), [131](#), [229](#), [230](#)
 and Sephardim, [8](#), [131–32](#), [135](#), [138](#), [163](#), [228–31](#), [263](#), [295](#), [340](#), [344](#)
 see also Germany, Jews; Jews and Judaism

Astor, John Jacob, 94, 98
Astor, Mrs. William, 60, 266, 269, 70, 318
Auchincloss (family), 263
Audler, Solomon, 135–36, 136–37

Baiz, Decadie, 135
Bajazet II, Sultan, 45, 48
Balmain, Count Alexander, 166
Barbados: Sephardim, 65
 slave trade, 104
Barclay (family), 263
Barclay, Cornelia, *see* De Lancey, Mrs. Stephen
Barclay, James, 237, 238
Bar Harbor: Sephardim, 264
Barnard, George S., 293
Barreto, Gen., 52–53
Baruch, Bernard, 329
Baruch, Bernhard, 329
Beekman (family), 101
Belgium: Sephardim, 20, 330
Belknap, Jeremy, 105
Belper, Algernon Henry Strutt, Baron, 176
Benjamin, Judah P., 271–72
Bent, Frank, 299
Bent, Mrs. Frank (Emily Cardozo), 299, 306
Black Plague, 34
Blair, Maj. Gen., 280, 281
Blake, James H., 251
“blue blood,” origin of term, 32
Boabdil, King, 43
Bogardus (family), 101
Bond, Lt., 212–13
Boston: Touro bequest, 143
Bourdeaux, Rose, 135
Bradford, Orlando Bridgeman, Earl of, 176
Brandon (family), 321; *see also* de Fonseca-Brandon (family)

Brandon, Frances Marion, 322–28
Brandon, Lyman, 322, 327, 328
Brazil: as Dutch colony, 51–52, 53, 62, 65, 66
 as Portuguese colony, 51, 52
 Sephardim, 51–52, 62, 65
Brewster (family), 181
Burden, Mrs. William A. M., 5
Bush, Mathias, 228
Butler, Benjamin, 247–51 *passim*

Cabral, Pedro Álvarez, 51
Capón, Ruy, 41
Cardozo (family), 60, 293, 298–99, 337, 344
Cardozo, Albert, 289, 292–96 *passim*, 299
Cardozo, Albert (Allie), 299
Cardozo, Mrs. Albert (Rebecca Nathan), 292, 299
Cardozo, Benjamin Nathan, 11, 12, 295–309 *passim*, 316, 351
Cardozo, Elizabeth, 299–300, 306
Cardozo, Ellen, 299, 300, 301, 303, 305, 308–09
Cardozo, Emily, *see* Bent, Mrs. Frank
Cardozo, Grace, 299
Cardozo, Michael Hart, 292
Cardozo & Nathan, 12
Carlos II, King, 89, 90
Castro, Archdeacon de, 85
Castro, Americo, 31–32
Catholicism, *see* Christianity
Catt, Carrie Chapman, 315
Cazenove, Pierre André Destrac, 144, 145
Cedarhurst (L.I.): Sephardim, 2
Charleston: Sephardim, 101, 337
Christianity: conversions to, by Jews, 8, 25, 231
 conversions to, by Jews and Moors, *see* *Converses*
 conversions to Judaism, 8
Crusades, 30, 34, 37
Inquisition, 52, 74–76 *see also* Spain, Inquisition

Churchill, Mrs. Randolph, 176
Clinton (family), 165
Clinton, Gov. George, 93, 165
Clinton, Sir Henry, 172
Cochrane, Sir Alexander, 203
Cohen, Abraham, 191–93
Cohen, Myer David, 188
Cohen, Mrs. Myer David (Judith Solis), 188
Columbus, Christopher, 31, 45–46, 47–48
Conrad, Barnaby, 5
Content, Rosa, *see* Seligman, Mrs. James
Conversos (Catholic converts; New Christians): Moors, 35–36, 38, 79
 Sephardim, 35–36, 38, 40, 42, 43, 46, 76–79, 84, 86–87
 reconversion to Judaism, 52
 see also Marranos
Córdoba: Moors, 28, 38
 Sephardim, 27, 38, 43
Coronel (family), 47
Cotton, John, 146
Crane, Capt. William, 215–16, 218, 219
Crawford, William H., 206
Cresquea, Judah, 45
Curaçao: Sephardic cemetery, 51

Da Costa (family), 322; *see also* Mendes–da Costa (family)
Da Costa, Benjamin, 196
Da Costa, Moses, 196
d’Acosta, Joseph, 69
Dale, Clara, 285–86, 289
Dandrada, Salvador, 69
d’Angers, Pierre Jean David, 236
da Silva (family), 8, 11, 185–86, 188
Da Silva, Duarte, 185
da Silva, Miguel Pacheco, *see* Seixas, Abraham Mendes
Da Silva Solis (Da Silva y Solis: family), *see* Solis (family)
Daughters of the American Revolution, 158

Davis, Jefferson, [271](#), [275](#)
de Fonseca (family), [8](#), [321](#), [322](#)
de Fonseca, Cardinal, [321](#)
de Fonseca, Dona Isabel, [186](#)
de Fonseca–Brnndon (family), [320–22](#)
de Fonseca–Brandon, James, [320–21](#)
De Lamar, Alice A., [323](#), [324](#)
De Lamar, Raphael, [323](#)
de la Motthe, Jacques, [53–59](#) *passim*, [61](#), [63](#)
De Lancey (family), [4](#), [165](#)
De Lancey, Charlotte, *see* Dundas, Lady David
De Lancey, Oliver, [164–65](#), [166](#)
De Lancey, Mrs. Oliver (Phila Franks), [164–65](#), [166](#)
De Lancey, Oliver, Jr., [167](#), [168](#)
De Lancey, Phila, *see* Payne-Gallwey, Mrs. Stephen
De Lancey, Stephen, [166](#)
De Lancey, Mrs. Stephen (Cornelia Barclay), [166](#)
De Lancey, Susannah, *see* Draper, Lady William
De Lancey, Sir William Howe, [166](#)
de Leon (family), [73](#)
de Leon, Jacob, [196](#), [197](#)
de Lucena (family), [71](#), [102](#), [347–48](#)
de Lucena, Abraham, [7](#), [11](#), [68](#), [69](#), [71](#), [73](#), [351](#)
de Lucena, Abraham Haim, [71–72](#)
de Lucena, Rebecca, [73](#)
Denmark: slave trade, [104](#), [106](#)
Depew, Chauncey, [317](#)
de Peyster (family), [101](#)
De Piza (Dias), Abraham Israel, [56](#), [57](#), [58](#)
de Rham, Henry C., [261](#)
de Sola (family), [8](#), [18–19](#)
de Sola, Aaron, [19](#)
de Sola, Don Bartolomé, [19](#)
de Sola, Baruch ben Isaac Ibn Daud, [18–19](#)
de Sola, David Aaron, [18](#)
de Sola, Eliza, *see* Mendes, Mrs. Abraham Pereira

de Sola, Isaac, 19
de Sola, Michael Ibn Daud, 19
de Torres, Luis, 46
de Torres, Rebecca, *see* Gomez, Mrs. Daniel
de Vera, Don Lope, 84
Deza, Diego, 84–85
Digby, Edward Kenelm Digby, Baron, 176
Disraeli, Benjamin, 271
Draper, Lady William (Susannah De Lancey), 166
Dreyfous (family), 7
Dundas, Lady David (Charlotte De Lancey), 166
Dunphy, Thomas, 283
Dutch West India Company, 51, 61, 63–65, 69, 70
Dutch West Indies: Sephardim, 21, 51

Edgeworth, Maria, 264, 269–70
Edict of Nantes, 91
Edman, Irwin, 304
English, William, 109–15 *passim*
Ellery, Lt. Frank, 225–26
Ellis, George, 286, 287
Ely, Nathan, 251
England, 50–51
 Sephardim, 15, 19, 330
 anti-Semitism, 101
 in colonies, 65
 expulsion, 76
 slave trade, 104, 106
 see also New York (English colony)
Etting (family), 159, 162, 177
Etting, Emlen, 159
Etting, Esther, *see* Hays, Mrs. David
Etting, Reuben, 160
Etting, Reuben II, 177
Evans, Margaret, *see* Franks, Mrs. David
Ewing, Samuel, 179–80

Faro, David Israel, [56](#)
Federation of Polish Jews of America, [156](#), [157](#)
Ferdinand, King of Aragon, [39–44](#), [46](#), [47](#), [82](#)
Ferdinand III, King, [30–31](#)
Fita, Fidel, [80–81](#)
Florance (family), [311](#)
Florance, Annette, *see* Nathan, Mrs. Robert Weeks
Florance, Ted, [311](#), [312](#)
Florance, Mrs. Ted (Rosalie Nathan), [312–13](#)
Florance, Mrs. William, [311–12](#)
Forrester, Billy, [286–87](#)
France: Edict of Nantes, [91](#)
 Jews, [33](#)
 Sephardim, in colonies, [65](#)
 slave trade, [104](#), [106](#)
Franco (family), [342–13](#); *see also* Franks (family)
Franco, Gen. Francisco, [342](#)
Franco, Nicolao, [42](#)
Frankfurter, Felix, [304](#)
Franklin, Benjamin, [147](#), [182](#)
Franks (family), [6](#), [148](#), [155](#), [161](#), [162](#), [177](#)
Franks, Aaron, [61](#)
Franks, Abigail, *see* Hamilton, Mrs. Andrew
Franks, David, [161](#), [166](#), [171–73](#), [175](#), [177](#), [228](#)
Franks, Mrs. David (Margaret Evans), [166](#)
Franks, Col. David Salisbury, [182](#)
Franks, Isaac, [152](#), [165](#)
Franks, Jacob, [161](#)
Franks, Mrs. Jacob (Abigail Levy), [161](#), [163–65](#), [166](#)
Franks, Moses, [148](#)
Franks, Naphtali (“Heartsey”), [163](#), [164](#)
Franks, Mrs. Naphtali (Phila Franks), [167](#)
Franks, Phila, *see* De Lancey, Mrs. Oliver; Franks, Mrs. Naphtali
Franks, Rachel, *see* Salomon, Mrs. Haym
Franks, Rebecca, *see* Johnson, Lady Henry
Franks, Richa, [164](#)

Fulton, Robert, [195](#)

Gansevoort, Leonard, [148](#)

Gaon, Dr. Solomon, [343](#), [344](#)

Garrison, Washington, [204](#)

Germany: Jews, [3](#), [25](#), [26](#), [27](#), [33](#); *see also* Ashkenazim

Gerstein, Dr. Louis C., [344](#)

Gilder, Richard Watson, [317](#)

Gillespie, George J., [322–28](#) *passim*

Gillette (family), [181](#)

Ginillo (family), *see* Santangel (family)

Girón, Don Pedro, [41](#)

Goldstone, Harmon Hendricks, [351](#)

Goldstone, Lafayette, [8](#)

Goldstone, Mrs. Lafayette, [303](#), [304](#), [305](#), [351–53](#)

Gomez (family), [7](#), [11](#), [21](#), [72–73](#), [74](#), [99](#), [102](#), [117](#), [139](#), [148](#), [295](#), [347](#)
in Spain, [88–89](#), [90](#), [91](#)

Gomez, Alfonso, [89](#)

Gomez, Daniel, [92–98](#) *passim*, [102](#), [117–20](#), [128](#)

Gomez, Mrs. Daniel (Rebecca de Torres), [92](#)

Gomez, Mrs. Daniel (Esther Levy), [92](#)

Gomez, David, [164](#)

Gomez, Esther, *see* Gomez, Mrs. Moses

Gomez, Eve Esther, *see* Hendricks, Mrs. Uriah

Gomez, Isaac (b. 1620), [89](#), [90–91](#)

Gomez, Isaac, Jr. (18th cent.), [120](#)

Gomez, Isaac (18th cent.), [191](#)

Gomez, Joseph Edwin, Jr., [99](#)

Gomez, Lewis (Louis) Moses, [88](#), [90](#), [91–92](#)

Gomez, Mrs. Lewis (Esther Marques), [91](#)

Gomez, Mathias, [132](#)

Gomez, Mordecai, [266](#)

Gomez, Moses, [98](#), [120](#), [128](#)

Gomez, Mrs. Moses (Esther Gomez), [120](#)

Gomez, Violante de Santangel, [89](#)

González de Mendoza, Cardinal Pedro, [43](#)

Goodwin (family), 4
Goodwin, Dr. Lyde, 5
Gorme, Eydie, 24
Gould, Jay, 292, 293–94, 295
Granada: Alhambra, 28
 Cathedral, tomb of Ferdinand and Isabella, 39–40
 Moors, 28, 33, 43
 Sephardim, 27, 88
Gratz (family), 162, 177, 178, 181–82
Gratz, Benjamin III, 181
Gratz, Helen, *see* Rockefeller, Mrs. Godfrey S.
Gratz, Henry Howard, 181
Gratz, Joseph, 177
Gratz, Michael, 175, 177
Gratz, Rachel, *see* Moses, Rachel Gratz
Gratz, Rebecca, 176–82 *passim*, 229
Gratz, Simon, 187
Great Seal (U.S.), 147
Greece: Sephardim, 50, 336, 337, 338; *see also* Sephardim, Levantine
 Sephardim
Guggenheim (family), 3
Guiana: Sephardim, 51
Gurney, Gene and Clare, 349

Hale, John P., 245
Hamilton, Andrew, 176
Hamilton, Mrs. Andrew (Abigail Franks), 166–67, 173, 176
Hart (family), 7, 21, 126, 348
Hart, Isaac, 126
Hart, Jacob, 229
Hassan, Suley, 186
Hay, Mary Garrett, 315
Hays (family), 21, 139, 159, 162, 177, 190
Hays, Catherine, 140
Hays, Caty, *see* Sarzedas, Mrs. Abraham
Hays, Charity, *see* Solis, Mrs. Jacob da Silva

Hays, David, 159–60, 167
Hays, Mrs. David (Esther Etting), 159, 160, 167
Hays, Judah, 189
Hays, Moses, 140
Hays, Rachel, 189
Hays, Rebecca, 140
Hays, Mrs. Samuel, 177
Hebrew language, 229, 338–39
Hellman, George, 305
Hendricks (family), 7, 11, 16, 21, 60, 68, 73, 117, 190, 261, 262, 263, 322, 344
Hendricks, Emily, *see* Nathan, Mrs. Benjamin Seixas
Hendricks, Harmon, 7, 191–99, 260, 261
Hendricks, Henry, 199, 251, 260
Hendricks, Mrs. Henry (Harriet Tobias), 260
Hendricks, Mrs. Henry S. (Rosalie Nathan), 16–18, 265
Hendricks, Hermoine, *see* Tobias, Mrs. Isaac
Hendricks, Montague, 199
Hendricks, Roselane, *see* Tobias, Mrs. Henry
Hendricks, Sally, 197–98
Hendricks, Uriah, 7, 190–91
Hendricks, Uriah II, 260
Hendricks, Mrs. Uriah (Eve Esther Gomez), 190, 191
Hendricks, Mrs. Uriah II (Fanny Lopez), 190
Hendricks, Mrs. Uriah, II, (Fanny Tobias), 260
Hendricks, Uriah II, 199
Hendricks, Ziporah Levy, 6
Henriques (family), 16; *see also* Hendricks (family)
Henriques, Jacob, 69
Henry (family), 195
Hitler, Adolf, 341, 342, 352
Hoffman, Matilda, 178
Hoffman, Ogden, 178
Holland: Brazil as colony, 51–52, 53, 62, 65, 66
 Dutch West India Company, 51, 61, 63–65, 69, 70
 Dutch West Indies, 21, 51

New Amsterdam, *see* New York (New Amsterdam)
Sephardim, 15, 19, 20, 21, 50, 51, 53, 62, 67, 69, 330
slave trade, 104, 106
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 304
Hopkins (family), 4
Hopkins, Samuel, 104
Howe, Gen. Sir William, 167

Indians, 62, 94–95
 Jews, identification with, 95–96
Ingersoll (family), 4, 162
Innocent III, Pope, 33
Inquisition, 52, 74–76; *see also* Spain, Inquisition
Irving, Washington, 178, 179
Isaacs, Solomon, 195
Isabella, Queen, 39–46 *passim*, 76, 82
Italy: Jews, 33

Jackson, Andrew, 239
Jacobs, Samuel, 138
Jacobs, Mrs. Samuel (Rosette), 138
James I, King of Aragon, 30
Jefferson, Thomas, 147, 153, 202, 235–36, 237, 238, 350
Jews and Judaism: anti-Semitism, 61–70 *passim*, 76, 101, 221–22, 227, 243, 250, 251, 252
 see also Spain, Sephardim, anti-Semitism
 conversions to Christianity, 8, 25, 231
 see also Conversos, Sephardim
 ghettos, 27
 Hebrew language, 229, 338–39
 identification badge and dress, 33–34, 37, 38, 81–82, 352
 Indians, identification with, 95–96
 Jewishness descendant from distaff side, 5
 Mosaic Code, 146
 Reform movement, 231, 307, 331
 slave trade, 103, 108

taxation, [26–27](#)
Yiddish language, [231](#)
zekhut avot (ancestral merit), [10](#)
see also Ashkenazim ; Sephardim
John II, King of Castile, [35](#)
John II, King of Portugal, [32](#)
Johnson, Lady Henry (Rebecca Franks), [6](#), [166–77](#) *passim*, [200–01](#)
Johnson, Sir Henry, [6](#), [175](#)
Johnston, Johnny, [264–65](#)
Johnston, Mrs. Johnny (Annie Lazarus), [264–65](#), [267](#)
Jones, Thomas Catesby, [218](#)
Joy, Levi, [205](#)
Juana la Loca (Joan the Mad), [85](#), [89](#)
Judah, DeWitt Clinton, [6](#)
Judah, Walter J., [348](#)
Judaism, *see* Jews and Judaism

Kamen, Henry, [81](#)
Keenan, Annie, [283](#), [287](#)
Kelly, Mrs., [276–77](#), [277–78](#), [281](#)
Kelly, David, [313](#), [314](#)
Kelly, William, [276](#), [281](#), [287](#), [288](#)
Kierstede (family), [101](#)
King (family), [263](#)
Kohler, Max J., [156](#)
Kosciusko, Thaddeus, [154](#)
Kuhn (family), [3](#)
Kuhn, Loeb & Company, [4](#)

La Caballería (family), [41](#)
Ladino language (Judeo-Spanish), [31](#), [331](#), [338–39](#)
Lane, Amos, [236](#)
Langdon, Rev. Samuel, [147](#)
Lazarus (family), [4](#), [26](#), [266–67](#), [337](#), [344](#), [348](#)
Lazarus, Annie, *see* Johnson, Mrs. Johnny
Lazarus, Emma, [4](#), [12](#), [265](#), [266](#), [277](#)

Lazarus, Frank, [266–67](#)
Lazarus, Jacob Hart, [265](#), [353](#)
Lazarus, Mrs. Jacob Hart (Amelia Barnard Tobias), [7](#), [265–69](#), [270](#)
Lazarus, Sarah, [266](#)
Lee, Gen. Charles, [170–71](#)
Lehman (family), [3](#)
Lehr, Harry, [270](#)
Levy (family), [4–5](#), [71](#), [73](#), [92](#), [126](#), [136](#), [148](#), [161](#), [162](#), [201](#), [263](#), [337](#)
Levy, Abigail, *see* Franks, Mrs. Jacob
Levy, Amelia, *see* Von Mayhoff, Mrs. Amelia Levy
Levy Levy, Asser, [56](#), [72](#)
Levy, Benjamin, [201](#)
Levy, Esther, *see* Gomez, Mrs. Daniel
Levy, Fanny, *see* Lopez, Mrs. Abraham
Levy, Jacob, [117](#)
Levy, Jefferson, [257](#), [263](#), [349–50](#)
Levy, L. A., Jr., [135](#), [136](#), [137](#)
Levy, Mrs. L. Napoleon, [263](#)
Levy, Moses, [70–71](#)
Levy, Nathan, [201](#)
Levy, Rachel, [350](#)
Levy, Samson, [161](#), [201](#)
Levy, Uriah Phillips, [200–27](#), [233](#), [235–54](#), [256](#), [257](#), [258](#), [259](#), [271](#), [348–19](#), [350](#)
Levy, Mrs. Uriah Phillips (Virginia Lopez), [246](#), [249](#), [253–58](#)
Lewis, Harold L., [348](#), [350](#)
Livingston (family), [4](#), [263](#)
Lockerman (family), [101](#)
Lodge (family), [4](#)
Loeb (family), [3](#), [4](#)
Loeb, Carl Morris, [329](#)
Loeb, Mrs. Carl Morris (Adeline Moses), [329](#)
Loeb, John L., [9](#), [329](#)
Loeb, Rhoades & Company, [9](#)
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, [130](#)
Lopez (family), [8](#), [122](#), [126](#), [127](#), [139](#), [144](#), [148](#), [195](#), [271](#), [347](#)

Lopez, Aaron, [102](#), [108–30](#) *passim*, [139](#)
Lopez, Mrs. Aaron (Abigail or Anna), [102](#), [116–17](#), [161](#)
Lopez, Mrs. Aaron (Sally Rivera), [117](#)
Lopez, Abraham, [246](#)
Lopez, Mrs. Abraham (Fanny Levy), [246](#)
Lopez, Hannah, [117](#)
Lopez, Moses, [102](#)
Lopez, Rebecca, *see* Hendricks, Mrs. Uriah
Lopez, Rebecca Touro, [142](#)
Lopez, Samuel, [195](#)
Lopez, Sarah (Sally), *see* Mendes, Mrs. Abraham Pereira
Lopez, Virginia, *see* Levy, Mrs. Uriah Phillips
López de Ayala, Pedro, [37](#)
Lopez-Lopez, Rachel, [117](#)
Los Angeles: Sephardim, [338](#)
Lowell, Josephine Shaw, [317](#)
Lumbroso, Mose, [56](#), [58](#)
Lutherans: Dutch persecution, [62](#), [63](#), [64](#)
 first American church, [72](#)
Lyons, Sarah, [309](#)

McAllister, Ward, [60](#), [270](#)
McBlair (family), [4](#)
McCann, John H., [293](#)
McClure (family), [181](#)
Mackay, Mrs. Clarence, [315](#)
Madison, James, [153–54](#), [194](#), [261](#)
Maduro (family), [190](#)
Maduro, Levy, [189](#)
Maduro, Mrs. Levy (Cohen Peixotto), [189](#)
Maduro-Peixotto (family), [189](#)
Maduro-Peixotto, Moses Levy, [190](#)
Mangam, John, [279](#), [280](#)
Marks, Albert J. “Reley,” [132–35](#)
Marques, Esther, *see* Gomez, Mrs. Lewis

Marranos, [35](#), [46](#), [51](#), [56](#), [78–79](#), [87–88](#), [330–31](#); *see also* *Conversos*,
Sephardim
Marshall (family), [181](#)
Martinez, Don Ferrán, [37](#)
Martinique: Sephardim, [65](#)
Martya, Jan, [57–58](#)
Mathews, Annie, [322](#)
Mayhew, Rev. Jonathan, [147](#)
Mears, Judah, [165](#)
Megapolensis, Rev. John, [63](#)
Mellish, Kitty (Caterina Mendes–da Costa Villa-Real Mellish), [321](#)
Mellon (family), [270](#)
Mendes (family), [8](#), [18–19](#), [19–20](#), [121](#), [126](#), [188](#), [271](#)
Mendes, Abraham Pereira II, [9](#)
Mendes, Abraham Pereira I, [121–25](#) *passim*, [128](#)
Mendes, Mrs. Abraham Pereira (Eliza de Sola), [19](#)
Mendes, Mrs. Abraham Pereira (Sarah or Sally Lopez), [102](#), [121–25](#)
passim, [128](#)
Mendes, Dona Caterina, [321](#)
Mendes, David, [125](#)
Mendes, David Franco, [52](#), [53](#)
Mendes, Don Fernando, [321–22](#)
Mendes, Dona Gracia (Lady Beatrice de Luna), [19–20](#)
Mendes, Henry Pereira, [18](#), [19](#), [20](#)
Mendes, Leah, [121](#), [123–25](#)
Mendes, Piza, [17–20](#) *passim*
Mendes–da Costa, Antonio, [321](#)
Mendes–da Costa, Sarah, *see* de Fonseca–Brandon, Sarah Mendes–da Costa
Mendola (family), [8](#)
Mendoza y Bobadilla, Cardinal Francisco, [78](#)
Mercado (De Mercado; de Mereda), Judith (Judica), [56](#)
Mesoncort, George, [204](#)
Meyer, Dr. Alfred, [316](#), [317](#)
Meyer, Mrs. Alfred (Annie Nathan), [11–12](#), [298](#), [310–11](#), [313](#), [315–19](#)
passim, [340](#)
Mill, David, [109–13](#) *passim*

Miller, Alice Duer, [318](#)
Miller, Kenneth Hayes, [299](#)
Mills, Harriet May, [315](#)
Minis (family), [195](#)
Monroe, James, [153](#), [219](#), [222–23](#)
Moors, [27–36](#) *passim*, [43](#)
 Conversos, [35–36](#), [38](#), [79](#)
 and Sephardim, [28–29](#), [30](#), [32](#), [34–35](#), [36](#), [44](#)
Morgan (family), [270](#)
Morocco: Sephardim, [50](#)
Morris (family), [163](#)
Morris, Robert, [149](#), [150](#), [152](#), [156](#), [157](#)
Mosaic Code, [146](#)
Moses (family), [4](#), [329](#)
Moses, Adeline, *see* Loeb, Mrs. Carl Morris
Moses, Lion, [152](#)
Moses, Rachel Gratz, [180](#)
Moya, Marquesa de, [41](#)

Nathan (family), [7](#), [11–16](#), [21](#), [51](#), [60](#), [68](#), [73](#), [188](#), [259](#), [263](#), [273–74](#), [337](#),
[344](#)
Nathan, Annie, *see* Meyer, Mrs. Alfred
Nathan, Benjamin Seixas, [275](#), [276–89](#), [295](#)
Nathan, Mrs. Benjamin Seixas (Emily Hendricks), [275](#), [290](#)
Nathan, Edgar J., Jr., [11](#), [12](#), [60](#)
Nathan, Elvira, *see* Solis, Mrs. David Hays
Nathan, Emily Da Silva Solis, [12–13](#), [14](#), [16](#), [23](#), [186](#)
Nathan, Frederick, [273](#), [276–80](#) *passim*
Nathan, Mrs. Frederick (Maud Nathan), [310](#), [315–16](#), [319](#)
Nathan, Frederic Solis, [12](#)
Nathan, Isaac Mendes Seixas, [12](#), [274](#)
Nathan, Maud, *see* Nathan, Mrs. Frederick
Nathan, Mendes Seixas, [11](#)
Nathan, Mrs. Mendes Seixas (Sarah Seixas), [11](#)
Nathan, Rebecca, *see* Cardozo, Mrs. Albert
Nathan, Robert, [306](#)

Nathan, Robert Weeks, 310, 311, 313, 314–15
Nathan, Mrs. Robert Weeks (Annette Florance), 311, 313–14
Nathan, Rosalie, *see* Florance, Mrs. Ted; Hendricks, Mrs. Henry S.
Nathan, Sarah Seixas, 276
Nathan, Washington, 276–80 *passim*, 284–91 *passim*
Nathan, Mrs. Washington (Nina Mapleson Arnott), 290
Newbold (family), 162
New Orleans: Ashkenazim, 132, 135, 138, 229
 Sephardim, 101, 132–33, 134–35, 138, 187, 229
 Touro bequest, 143
Newport: Jewish cemetery, 130, 145
 Jewish club, 125–26, 139
 Sephardim, 101–02, 120, 125–26, 127, 161, 264, 337
 slave trade, 102–07 *passim*
 Touro bequest, 143
 Touro Synagogue, 101, 139
New York (English colony): Ashkenazim, 163
 Dutch in, 100–01
 Sephardim, 170
New York (New Amsterdam)
 Sephardim, 68–70
 anti-Semitism, 61–70 *passim*
 arrival of, 2, 23–24, 49, 53–59
New York City, 233–35
 Barnard College, 12, 317–18
 Bronx, Sephardim in, 2
 clubs closed to Jews, 5
 Dutch Church, 101
 Emanu-El, 306–07, 347
 Harmonie Club, 344*n*
 Lower East Side, 2, 307, 338
 Montefiore Hospital, 20
 Saint Mark's in-the-Bowery, 351
 Sephardic cemeteries, 347, 348
 Chatham Square Cemetery, 20, 60, 71, 347
 Sephardic synagogues, 9, 60, 72, 336

Sephardim, 337–38
Shearith Israel, 9, 13, 92, 97–98, 273, 307–08, 340, 344, 345–47
 de Lucena, Abraham Haim, 71–72
 founding, 59
 Gerstein, Louis C., 344
 Mendes, Henry Pereira, 18, 20
 Pool, David de Sola, 20, 340, 352
 Seixas, Gershom Mendes, 11, 190
 and Touro Synagogue (Newport), 101
Trinity Church, 71, 92
Union Club, 266, 271, 296
Union League Club, 271
Upper East Side, 307
New York Guild for the Jewish Blind, 20
New-York Historical Society: Hendricks Collection, 16–17
Nones, Benjamin, 152
Norden, De Leon, 230
Norfolk, Bernard Marmaduke Fitzalan Howard, Duke of, 176
Nunes (family), 73
Nunes, Ricke (Rachel), 56, 59

Pacheco, Don Juan, 41
Padilla, Dona María de, 42
Payne-Gallwey, Mrs. Stephen (Phila De Lancey), 166
Peckham, Walton, 281
Peixotto (family), 8, 21, 188–89, 190, 348; *see also* Mendes-Peixotto
 (family)
Peixotto, Antonio Mendes, 189
Peixotto, Cohen, *see* Maduro, Mrs. Levy
Peixotto, Don Diego, 189
Peixotto, Joshua, 189
Perry, Comm. Matthew, 250
Pessoa, Isaac, 192–93
Peter I, King, 42
Philadelphia: Ashkenazim, 228–29
 Meschianza, 167–69, 171

Mikveh Israel, 98, 340
Sephardim, 11, 56, 101, 159, 160–61, 162, 173–74, 223, 337
Philip I, King, 85
Philip II, King, 78
Philip III, King, 84
Philip IV, King, 89–90
Phillips (family), 21, 101
Phillips, Lloyd Peixotto, 21
Phillips, Mrs. Lloyd Peixotto (Beatrice), 21–22
Pierce, Franklin, 248
Pietersen, Solomon, 54–55, 58–59
Pilgrims, 61
Pinto, Beatrice, 185
Polhemius, Dominie Joannes, 63
Polynesia: Sephardim, 51
Pool, Dr. David de Sola, 20–21, 340, 352
Portland: Sephardim, 338
Portnoy (family), 25
Portugal: Brazil as colony, 51, 52
 Sephardim, 2, 15, 19, 21, 23–27 *passim*, 29, 32, 33, 47, 49–50
 slave trade, 104, 106
Potter, Lt. William, 208–12 *passim*
Primrose, Lady Lavinia Mary, 176
Pulaski, Casimir, 154
Pulgar, Hernando de, 41, 87
Puritans, 64, 146

Quakers: Dutch persecution, 62

Randolph, Edmund, 153–54
Randolph, Martha Jefferson, 237
Random, Don Francesco, 154
Rappaport (family), 25
Recife: Sephardim, 51, 52, 53
Revere, Paul, 193–94
Rhodes: Sephardim, 331, 332, 338, 342

Ridgely, Charles Goodwin, 5
Riker, “Big Sam,” 268
Riker, “Little Sam,” 268
Rittenhouse (family), 263
Rivera (family), 126, 139
Rivera, Jacob Rodriguez, 102, 108–15, 117, 127, 138–39
Rivera, Sally, *see* Lopez, Mrs. Aaron
Rockefeller (family), 4, 270
Rockefeller, Mrs. Godfrey S. (Helen Gratz), 181–82
Roos, Garret Janson, 72
Roosevelt (family), 262
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 157
Roosevelt, Theodore, 315, 350
Rosebery, Albert Edward Harry Mayer Archibald, Earl of, 176
Rowland (family), 181
rum trade, 104–07 *passim*, 193

Sachs (family), 25
St. Clair, Gen. Arthur, 153
Saks (family), 25
Salmasius, 62
Salomon (family), 149, 150
Salomon, Haym, 145–58 *passim*, 167, 346
Salomon, Mrs. Haym (Rachel Franks), 149, 150, 155, 167
Salomon, Haym Moses, 154–55, 156–57
Salonica: Sephardim, 331, 332
Sánchez (family), 41
Sánchez, Gabriel, 45, 46
Sancho II, King, 26
Santa María, Don Pablo de (Selemohha-Levi), 35–36, 37
Santangel (family), 88–89
Santangel, Clara de, 88
Santangel, Doñosa de, 88
Santangel, Gabriel de, 89
Santangel, Jaime Martin de, 88
Santangel, Luis de, 45, 46, 89

Santangel, Simon de, [88](#)
Santangel, Violante de, *see* Gomez, Violante de Santangel
Saratoga: Sephardim, [264](#)
Sartain, John, [178](#)
Sarzedas, Abraham, [189](#), [190](#)
Sarzedas, Mrs. Abraham (Caty Hays), [189–90](#)
Savannah: Sephardim, [101](#), [337](#)
Saxe (family), [25](#)
Schiff (family), [3](#), [271](#)
Schuyler, Philip, [148](#)
Scott, Sir Walter, [178–79](#)
Scott, Gen. Winfield, [175](#)
Scoville, Joseph, [198–99](#)
Seattle: Sephardim, [338](#)
Seixas (family), [7](#), [11](#), [21](#), [25](#), [60](#), [188](#), [189](#), [190](#), [263](#), [337](#), [347](#)
 Germanized versions of name, [25](#)
 in Spain, [25](#)
Seixas, Abraham Mendes (Miguel Pacheco da Silva), [189](#)
Seixas, Benjamin, [7](#)
Seixas, Gerahom Mendes, [7](#), [11](#), [18](#), [190](#), [274](#)
Seixas, Moses, [183](#)
Seixag, Sarah, *see* Nathan, Mrs. Mendes Seixas; Nathan, Sarah Seixas
Seixas, Vic, [25](#)
Seixas, Victor Monteflore, [25](#)
Selemoh, Don, [39](#), [40](#)
Seligman (family), [296](#)
Seligman, James, [263](#)
Seligman, Mrs. James (Rosa Content), [263](#)
Seligman, Joseph, [296](#)
Senior, Don Abraham, [39](#), [40](#), [41](#), [45–46](#), [47](#)
Sepharad, [24](#)
Sephardim, [229](#), [232](#)
 and Ashkenazim, [8](#), [131–32](#), [135](#), [138](#), [163](#), [228–31](#), [263](#), [295](#), [340](#), [344](#)
 characteristics and traits, [8–9](#), [62–63](#)
 conversions to Christianity, [8](#), [231](#)
 Conversos, [35–36](#), [38](#), [40](#), [42](#), [43](#), [46](#), [76–79](#), [84](#), [86–87](#)

reconversions to Judaism, 52
derivation of name, 24
in finance, 26, 29–30, 34, 39, 45–46, 62, 69–70, 76, 77
importance of the past, 23, 328–29, 344–45
Ladino language (Judeo-Spanish), 31, 331, 338–39
Levantine Sephardim, 2, 48, 50, 331–40
magic and healing, 334–35
Marranos, 35, 46, 51, 56, 78–79, 87–88, 330–31
phoenix as symbol, 67
zekhut avot (ancestral merit), 10
see also Jews and Judaism; Portugal, Sephardim; Spain, Sephardim
Seville: Sephardim, 15, 19, 27, 37, 43, 78, 79
Seward, William, 97
Shackelford (family), 263
“sheeny,” origin of word, 230
Shepherd, Rezin Davis, 143
Shippen, Peggy, 167
Sixtus IV, Pope, 82
slave trade, 102–07, 193
Solis (family), 8, 11, 185, 186, 188, 190
 Da Silva Solis (Da Silva y Solis; family), 185–86
Solis, David, 188
Solis, Mrs. David Hays (Elvira Nathan), 13, 188
Solis, Elvira Nathan, 13–16, 23, 25, 60, 185, 186, 187, 188
Solis, Fernao Jorge Da, 185
Solis, Isabel de, 186
Solis, Jacob da Silva, 186–88
Solis, Mrs. Jacob da Silva (Charity Hays), 187, 188
Solis, Joseph, 187
Solis, Joseph Da Silva, 186
Solis, Judith, *see* Cohen, Mrs. Myer David
Solis, Solomon da Silva, 186
Solis-Cohen (family), 11, 188
Souza, Victor, 135
Spain: Castilian language, 31
 Crusades, 30, 34, 37

Inquisition, 15, 19, 25, 42–43, 44–45, 49–50, 74–88
 auto-da-fé, 77, 79–81, 84–85, 86, 90
 sanbenito, 81–82
 scourging, 80, 81
 see also Sephardim, Expulsion Edict *below*

Latin language, 31

Moors, *see* Moors

Sephardim, 2, 15, 23–48, 341–12, 343
 anti-Semitism, 29, 30, 34–38 *passim*, 40, 42, 74–75; *see also*
 Inquisition *above*
 Anusim see Conversos; Marranos below
 astronomy and navigation, interest in, 30, 31, 45
 Conversos (Catholic converts; New Christians), 35–36, 38, 40, 42, 43,
 46, 76–79, 84, 86–87; *see also* Marranos *below*
 Expulsion Edict, 44–50 *passim*, 75, 330–31, 332, 341–42, 343
 in finance, 26, 29–30, 34, 39, 45–46, 76, 77
 identification badge and dress, 33–34, 37, 38, 81–82
 Ladino language (Judeo-Spanish), 31, 331
 limpieza doctrine, 77–78
 Marranos, 35, 46, 78–79, 87–88, 330–31; *see also* *Conversos* *above*
 as merchants, 30, 32
 and Moors, 28–29, 30, 32, 34–35, 36, 44
 as physicians, 29, 34, 42, 76–77
 protection by the Crown, 30–31, 36
 right to wear arms, 32
 as scholars, 29, 30, 31
 taxes, 26

Spencer, William A., 225, 226

Starin, Mrs. Jeffrey, 99

Stern, Jacob, 3

Stern, Malcolm H.: *Americans of Jewish Descent*, 1–11, 185, 186, 190, 232,
 329

Stevenson (family), 4

Stewart, Comm. Charles, 215–16, 250

Stiles, Ezra, 104, 129–30, 147

Stringham, Comm. Silas, 250

Stuart, Gilbert, 196
Stuyvesant, Peter, 61–62, 64–69 *passim*, 351
Suffolk, Charles Brandon, Duke of, 321
Sully, Thomas, 166, 178, 180–81, 214
Sulzberger, Arthur Hays, 139*n*
Susan, Diego de, 78
Susman, Moses, 71

Talavera, Fray Hernando de, 41
Taylor (family), 181
Ten Eyek (family), 4
Thompson, Comm. Edward, 217
Tiffany (family), 4
Tobias (family), 7, 260
Tobias, Amelia Barnard, *see* Lazarus, Mrs. Jacob Hart
Tobias, Fanny, *see* Hendricks, Mrs. Uriah
Tobias, Florian, 260–61
Tobias, Harriet, *see* Hendricks, Mrs. Henry
Tobias, Henry, 260
Tobias, Mrs. Henry (Roselane Hendricks), 199, 260
Tobias, Isaac, 260
Tobias, Mrs. Isaac (Hermoine Hendricks), 260
Tobias, Alfred, 260
Tobias, Sophia, 266, 267
Tobias, Tobias I., 260, 263
Toledo (Spain): center of astronomical learning, 31
 Sephardim, 15, 27, 38, 79, 87
Torquemada, Tomás de, 82–83, 84
Touro (family), 139, 145
Touro, Isaac, 138–39
Touro, John, 145
Touro, Judah, 138–45 *passim*, 158, 177, 200, 229
Townsend, Joseph, 87
Tracy, Kate, 300
Turkey: Sephardim, 2, 48, 50, 331–36, 337
 see also Sephardim, Levantine Sephardim

Tuttle, Bishop, 182
Tweed, “Boss” William, 293–94, 295
Tyler, John, 243, 244

Van Cortlandt (family), 101
Vanderbilt (family), 5, 270
Vanderpoel, Aaron, 251
Van Horn, Cornelia, 174–75
Van Rensselaer (family), 4, 101, 263
Van Rensselaer, Gratz, 178
Verplanck (family), 162
Vincent Ferrer, Saint, 38
Von Mayhoff, Mrs. Amelia Levy, 350

Waag, Rachel, 196
Wallace (family), 181
Walling, George, 287–88
Warburg (family), 3
Washington, George, 11, 146, 147, 152–53, 155, 157, 170, 182, 183–84,
201
Wayne, Gen. Anthony, 169–70
Weaver, Lt. William, 223, 224
Weed, Ella, 317
Wharton, Edith, 265, 274
Wharton, Joseph, 168
Whichcote, Sir Thomas, 176
Willis, Nathaniel Parker, 253
Wilson, Ellen, 144, 145
Wilson, James, 153
Wolff (family), 263
Wolff, Agnes Hendricks, 264
Wolff, Frances Nathan, 7
Woortman, Henrick, 111–12, 114

yellow, as color of cowardice: in identification badges and dress, 33–34, 37,
38, 81–82, 352

Yiddish language, [231](#)

Zacuto, Abraham ben, [45](#)

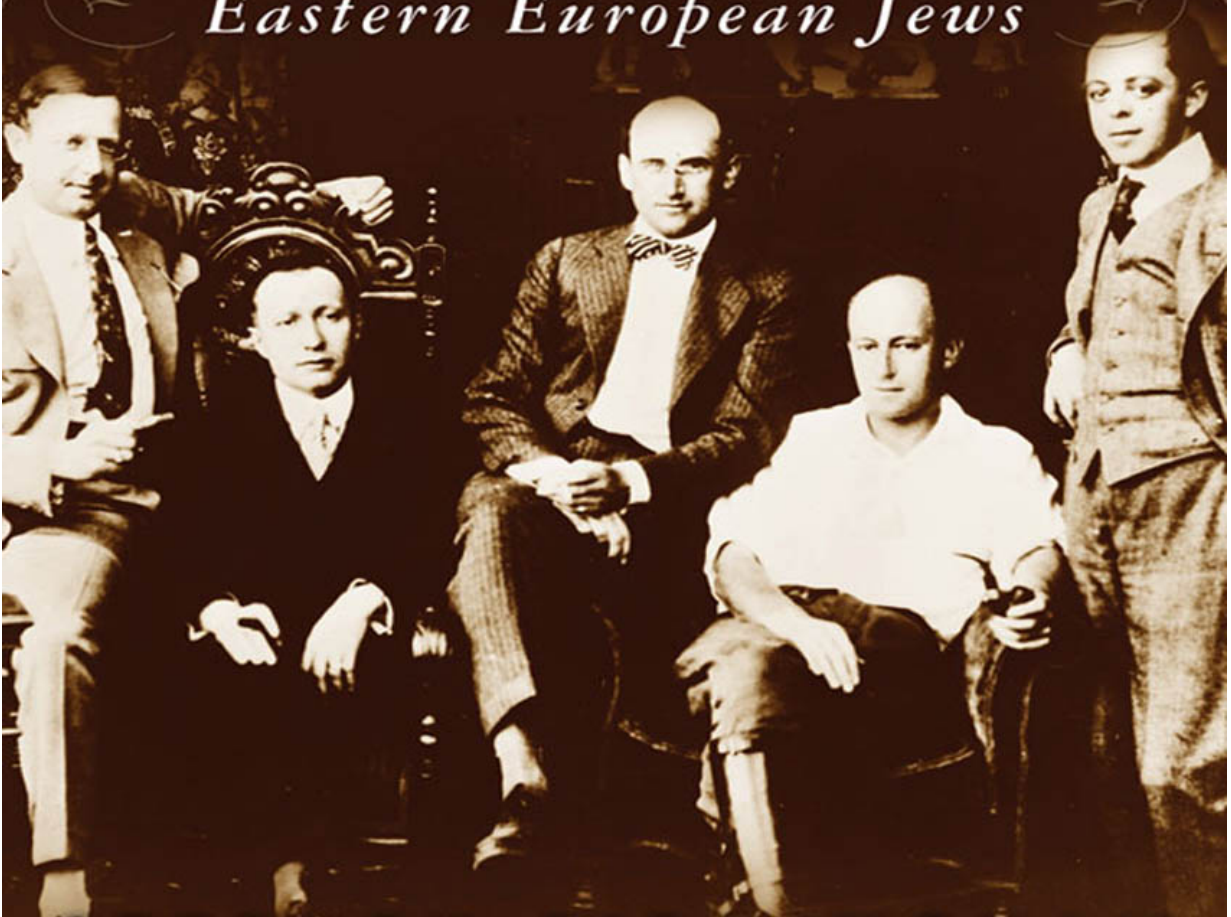
zekhut avot (ancestral merit), [10](#)

Zuntz (family), [2](#)

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

“THE REST OF US”

*The Rise of America's
Eastern European Jews*



STEPHEN BIRMINGHAM

AUTHOR OF "OUR CROWD"



“The Rest of Us”

The Rise of America’s Eastern European Jews

Stephen Birmingham



For Harry Sions in memory

Contents

Preface

Part One

BEGINNINGS: 1880–1919

1. Uptown Firebrand
2. Why They Came
3. A Jewish Cinderella
4. An Occupation for Gentlemen
5. Heroes and Heroines

Part Two

GETTING OUT: 1920–1950

6. The Jewish Lake and Other Creations
7. Fitting In
8. Minstrels and Minstrelsy
9. High Rollers
10. Little Caesars
11. Deals
12. War
13. At Last, a Homeland

14. Touches of Class
15. All That Money Can Buy

Part Three
HERE WE ARE: 1951–

16. Crown Princes
17. Witch-Hunting
18. “People Who Are Solid”
19. From Poland to Polo

Image Gallery

Acknowledgments

Source Notes

Selected Bibliography

Index

Preface

It was not my intention when I decided to write this book to write a book that would merely be “about rich people.” There are some readers, of course, who will argue that this is what the book has become, since our American society inevitably measures success in dollars. But I was actually thinking of America’s Eastern European Jews in terms of another kind of success—a social success, that of a mass migration of millions of people who have managed to become, within the lifespan of a single generation, an essential part of our social fabric and civic landscape.

The Jewish immigrants who came to America between 1881 and 1915 seemed, at first glance, to be culturally unadaptable: poor, hungry, ill-clothed, often sickly, speaking no English and in some cases illiterate, they were also steeped in a religious tradition that even America’s older-established Jews considered barbaric and bordering upon fanaticism. Politically, they burned with ideas that most Americans had been taught were radical and dangerous. No culture could have seemed more alien to our shores. What could possibly be done with these people, these benighted escapees from a distant, despotic land? How and where would they ever fit in?

And yet, barely a hundred years later, here they are—as people of prominence and influence in every major American city, and in nearly every walk of life. They have survived anti-Semitism from both Christians and fellow Jews. And they have prospered—in a wide-ranging spectrum of businesses from Wall Street to Hollywood, as well as in science, education, politics, the professions, and the arts—and their prosperity has contributed to the prosperity of America at large. Theirs has been a success story in what the sociologists call assimilation.

It would be simplistic to say that this is a story that could have happened “only in America.” America did not offer the Eastern Europeans much of

anything to begin with, beyond a chance to be lucky. But, with the inner resources these Jews were possessed of, that chance was enough. Throughout the world, and throughout history, Jews had been punished and persecuted whenever and wherever they seemed to outstep their bounds and threaten, economically, the Christian majority. In fifteenth-century Spain and Portugal, the Catholic monarchs expelled the Jews simply because they had become too important, too necessary. Similar Christian illogic was behind the czarist pogroms of Russia. For a time, for instance, Russian Jews were permitted to be bartenders and innkeepers, and to work in the liquor trade. But when they proved to be good at it, and prospered at it, allegations arose that the Jews were plotting to take over Russia, using vodka as a weapon to befuddle innocent Russian Christian minds, and a harsh reaction followed. Fears that Jews were usurping more than their rightful share of Europe's money and power were also behind Hitler's grisly plan to "cleanse" Europe of its Jews. But in America, to its credit, as the Russian Jews prospered, this did not happen, though there were plenty of mutterings of "too much Jewish power" from certain quarters. It didn't happen, perhaps, because we are a nation of immigrants, a nation of gamblers—what greater gamble is there than immigration itself?—and in our hearts we all believe that everyone deserves that chance to be lucky, and this is what we mean when we talk about freedom.

But when assessing the success of the Eastern European Jews in the United States, it is important to keep matters in perspective, and to remember that for all their financial prosperity no American Jewish families have ever come remotely close to equaling the fortunes of the wealthiest non-Jews. The canard that Jewish money dominates the country is just that. No American Jew has ever amassed a personal fortune equal to that of, say, J. P. Morgan, Henry Ford, Henry Clay Frick, Andrew Carnegie, or Howard Hughes. Among contemporary non-Jewish families, the Mellon and du Pont families are each worth between three and five billion dollars. The Getty and Daniel K. Ludwig families are worth between two and three billion, and the Rockefellers between one and two billion.

By contrast, the richest Jewish family in America is the Pritzker family of Chicago, collectively worth between seven hundred million and one billion dollars. The founding father, Nicholas J. Pritzker, came from Kiev at age nine in 1880, in the first wave of Russian immigrants. The basis of the

family fortune is Chicago real estate, which Pritzker began acquiring in the early 1900s when the city was still young and raw. “Never sell your land—lease it,” was his advice to his sons, and they followed it. Today, the Pritzker real estate holdings are worth, conservatively, half a billion dollars, and other Pritzker investments include Hyatt Hotels, the Cerro-Marmon Corporation, the Hammond Organ Company, the W. F. Hall Printing Company, Continental Airlines, and a number of trucking companies. The Chicago law firm of Pritzker and Pritzker has no clients other than itself, and has not accepted a new client in over forty years because of potential conflicts of interest with the family’s other, far-flung enterprises.

The second-wealthiest Jewish American family is that of the late Samuel Irving Newhouse of New York, who, with his two sons, built a communications empire worth between six and seven hundred million dollars—twenty-one daily newspapers, five magazines, six television stations, and twenty cable-television systems. The patriarch of this family fortune was born in 1895 on New York’s Lower East Side, the eldest of eight children of Russian and Austrian immigrants. Though Newhouse was in the business of pleasing the reading and viewing public, he had no use for personal publicity. Invited many times to be listed in *Who’s Who in America*, he refused to fill out the necessary forms. He was, however, intensely devoted to the welfare of his relatives, and was one of the most nepotistic of American employers. At one point, some sixty-four Newhouse sons, brothers, cousins, and in-laws were on the Newhouse payroll. His most visible philanthropic gift has been the Mitzi E. Newhouse Theatre at New York’s Lincoln Center, honoring his wife.

Next in line in the roster of Eastern European fortunes in America is that of Walter Annenberg and his seven sisters. Since the stock of Triangle Publications—the parent corporation that publishes *TV Guide*, *Seventeen*, the *Philadelphia Daily News*, and the *Daily Racing Form*, and that owns six television and nine radio stations, plus twenty-seven cable-TV franchises—has long been family held, the size of the Annenberg fortune has long been a matter of guesswork, but is probably in the three- to four-hundred-million-dollar range. To make sure that his private golf course at Sunny lands, his four-hundred-acre estate outside Palm Springs, would always have water, Walter Annenberg bought the local water company. Though Annenberg and his wife are solidly respectable citizens—he a former ambassador to the

Court of St. James's, she a former U.S. chief of protocol, and both friends of Presidents Nixon and Reagan—the family fortune is clouded by its founder, Walter's father, the late Moses L. Annenberg, who made his money from a telegraphic news service for bookie joints that carried information between racetracks across the country. In 1939, the senior Annenberg was convicted of income tax evasion, fined eight million dollars, and sentenced to three years in prison.

Less well known, perhaps, but on an equal financial footing with the Annenbergs is the Blaustein family of Baltimore. The founding father, Louis Blaustein, was born in Lithuania in 1869, and came to America in his teens. He started out as a kerosene peddler, and devised a then-novel way of transporting fuel—in a steel drum, mounted on wheels, with a spigot at the bottom, the forerunner of the tank truck. Next, he opened America's first drive-in gas station. Up to then, gasoline had been sold at curbside, a clumsy operation. At the time, motorists had to take a station attendant's word as to how much gasoline it took to fill their tanks, and more often than not, a station proprietor added a few gallons to the sale for good measure. At Blaustein's station, this sharp practice was eliminated, and a ten-gallon jar was affixed to the top of each pump with the gallonage marked off on its side, so the motorist could see how much he was getting. It was the forerunner of today's metered pumps.

But his most sophisticated innovation was his development of the first special antiknock motor fuel, which revolutionized the gasoline and automobile industry, and made possible the use of the high-compression engine. Blaustein's gasoline was called then, as it is now, Amoco. Louis Blaustein died in 1937, and his company was taken over by his son, Jacob. In 1954, Jacob Blaustein negotiated the sale of Amoco to Standard Oil of Indiana for stock that made the Blaustein family the largest shareholders in that company. Today, the Blausteins own some 5,250,000 shares of Indiana Standard, worth on a good Wall Street day between \$315,000,000 and \$400,000,000.

Interestingly, those Russian Jews who chose to seek their fortunes in the most unorthodox and riskiest ways wound up, though hardly poor, in financial strata considerably below the Pritzkers, Newhouses, Annenbergs, or Blausteins. From a long, charmed life as a mastermind of organized crime, Meyer Lansky died worth between \$100,000,000 and \$150,000,000.

And the flamboyant movie producers from Hollywood's golden era did even less well, despite the power they once wielded. Perhaps this was because they moved in a world where excessive spending became almost de rigueur, a kind of overhead that had to be figured into the cost of doing business, and where everyone was expected to die broke in the Old Actors' Home, which Louis B. Mayer had foresightedly helped endow. But Mayer himself, once the highest-salaried individual in the United States, died worth only \$10,000,000.

From such figures, however, it is clear that the Russian-Jewish immigrants, while they did not create fortunes equal to those of the Christians, did not do badly, either. And whereas before the arrival of the Russians, the Germans had been the dominant Jewish economic group, the Russians quickly eclipsed the Germans in both numbers and sheer buying power, a continuing source of hard feelings between the two groups—the German Jews of “old” money, and the spectacularly arisen Russian *nouveaux*.

In some ways, the careers of the Russian-Jewish entrepreneurs I have chosen (rather arbitrarily) to write about, and their twentieth-century success stories, call to mind the sagas of the notorious Christian robber barons of the century before—the first-generation Fricks, Goulds, Carnegies, Vanderbilts, Harrimans, Hills, and Rockefellers, all of whom proved that “new money” and “bad manners” did not rule each other out. The newer Jewish barons shared many characteristics with their older Christian counterparts—brashness, energy, vast egotism, a certain rapacity, and an almost touching absence of humor. All viewed “business” as a deadly, fascinating, zero-sum game with only one winner on any field, and a joyful opportunity to outmaneuver the federal government. All were intelligent, even highly so, but few were the least bit intellectual. None seemed to enjoy their money very much when they got it in such huge quantities. Their tastes in pleasure remained simple, fleshly, and inexpensive.

And so what is different about the twentieth-century American Jewish entrepreneurs from Eastern Europe? Simply put, they were more honest. Almost without exception (and including Meyer Lansky), they believed in

giving good weight. They were exceptionally careful about customer opinion. Few Russian Jews have been known to cry, “The public be damned!”—the curse that was uttered by William Henry Vanderbilt. There is Talmudic tradition in this. The Talmud itself enjoins against sharp practice, and cautions against, say, a Jewish cobbler’s placing his shop in too close proximity to the shop of another Jewish cobbler. The direct competition is to be given elbow room, and space in which to breathe and flourish. Perhaps these ethical standards explain why, for centuries, the ruling courts of Europe preferred to conduct their most important and sensitive business affairs with Jews. They could be trusted.

This significant difference also helps explain why, on the whole, Russian-Jewish business success in America has been accepted by the rest of the populace with equanimity and respect, without envy or rancor. The robber barons of old were feared and hated by the public, and vilified by the press. Even today the name of Jay Gould is a household word synonymous with ferocious greed and fiscal skulduggery. But who today has anything ill—or anything at all—to say about the business activities of a Nicholas Pritzker or a Louis Blaustein? Their public image has remained benign, if they have any public image at all.

The collective success stories—against such seeming odds—of the Russian Jews in America also illustrate a point well made by Emerson in *The American Scholar*: “If the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him.” (Disraeli, a Jew, put it a little differently: “Everything comes if a man will only wait.”) Bringing with them from the Old World so little culture that was usable in the New, that’s what these Jewish men and women had—instincts: instincts that told them to fight and survive.

Which is not to say that the majority of Eastern European Jews in America were fighters and instinct players. Most had no such ambitions, opportunities, talents, or temptations to conquer. Most made a living, paid their taxes, died, and were buried to the words of the Kaddish. But those who fought, fought well and fairly.

But, as I have said, this book is not intended to be just about people getting rich. And, impressive as the business successes of such as the Pritzkers, Newhouses, Annenbergs, and Blausteins may be, this is not a book about the rise of these particular families. Rather, it is about the rise of

men and women who have intimately affected the way we live and think and view and enjoy ourselves—who have, in the process of their American successes, left their imprint on our culture in terms of the news and entertainment media, the fashion and beauty industries, the arts and music, who have shaped our tastes in our living and even in our drinking habits. The book is inspired, if that is not too pompous a word, by a persistent suggestion. Having written two other books about earlier Jewish migrations to America—the proud Sephardic families who arrived many years before, and whose sons fought in, the American Revolution, and the German-Jewish banking and merchant families who came to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century—I felt it was appropriate to take up the third, and greatest, wave of Jewish immigration, which began in the 1880s and reached flood stage by 1910. “When,” Russian-Jewish friends kept asking me, “are you going to write a book about the rest of us?”

Here it is, and here they are.

S.B.

Part One

BEGINNINGS: 1880–1919

1

UPTOWN FIREBRAND

In the early summer of 1906, a huge and unruly mob of screaming Jewish women and children suddenly descended on a number of public schools on New York's Lower East Side and began hurling stones and brickbats at the buildings. The riot extended from Rivington Street to Grand Street, and from the Bowery to the East River, with the greatest violence concentrated in the most easterly sections. Windows and door panels of the schoolhouses were smashed, and certainly many frightened teachers—cowering within their classrooms—would have suffered bodily harm if a police task force, wielding nightsticks, had not quickly appeared and been able to quell the mob. It was not immediately clear, furthermore, what the uprising was all about.

The year 1906 was one of militancy by women. The charismatic Jewish-American anarchist Emma Goldman, then thirty-seven, had just founded her publication, *Mother Earth*, with her beloved "Sasha," Alexander Berkman, who had recently been released from prison for attempting to murder the steel magnate Henry Clay Frick in the Homestead Strike of 1892. The *London Daily Mail* had coined the terms "suffragettes" to describe women like Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters, Christabel and Sylvia, who were campaigning for woman suffrage. And the Lower East Side was by then no stranger to scenes of social unrest. The rent strikes of 1904 had been particularly disquieting and that same year, in the so-called Children's Strike, more than a hundred young women, many in adolescence, most of them Jewish, who had been earning pennies for piecework in a local paper-box factory, marched to protest a pay cut of ten percent. The irony was that their employer was one Mr. Cohen, a Jew.

Meanwhile, from the trickle of Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe—Russia, Poland, Rumania, Austria-Hungary—that had begun in 1881, there had grown a flood. By 1906, nearly two million Jews—roughly a third of the Jews of Eastern Europe—had left their homes. Over ninety percent of these had come to the United States, and most of them had settled in New York City, where Ellis Island was attempting to process as many as fifteen thousand immigrants a day. The Lower East Side was bursting at its seams. Yet none of these turbulent forces seemed immediately to account for the violent outburst of the women and children against the East Side public schools.

When the dust had settled, however, it turned out that a rumor had somehow billowed in the ghetto to the effect that doctors were murdering children in the schools by slashing their throats and then burying their bodies in the schoolyards. And blame for the incident—later labeled the Adenoids Riot—was laid at the doorstep of a much beleaguered lady educator named Julia Richman, the district school superintendent, who was herself Jewish.

In fact, it was a case of a Julia Richman program that had backfired. Among other innovations, Miss Richman had introduced seasonal smallpox vaccinations for East Side children. There had been much resistance to this at first, from immigrant parents who couldn't understand why their children were being pricked with needles, which resulted in sore arms. But eventually the vaccination program had been accepted. In 1906, however, at one school—P.S. 100 at Broome and Cannon streets—the vaccinating physicians had discovered that a number of children suffered from adenoids, or swollen lymph-node tissue at the back of the throat, which could be removed by simple surgery. The principal of P.S. 100, one Miss A. E. Simpson, had sent home carefully worded notes to the parents of the affected children, explaining that, if possible, parents should have their own doctors perform the operation. If not, Miss Simpson explained, Board of Health physicians would do the work at the schools at no cost, and if they wished this, parents were asked to sign forms and releases, giving the board their permission. Unable to read English, not knowing what they were signing, but doing their best to comply with strange new American customs and procedures, many parents had dutifully signed the forms. Thus it was the routine snipping of adenoids that had led to the throat-slashing stories.

The Christian press, typically, blamed “excitable, ignorant Jews, fearing Russian massacres here, knowing nothing of American sanitary ideas and the supervision exercised over school children by the Health Board,” for the riots. The *New York Tribune*, among others, praised the police for their “vigorous application of the slats to the most convenient section of the nearest ‘Yiddisher.’” But for the Lower East Siders it was another case of unwanted interference from Miss Richman.

Julia Richman was, in the somewhat disparaging phrase of the day, an “uptown do-gooder.” She followed in the noble tradition of women like Lillian Wald, a German-Jewish young woman who had come from a family of comfortable means, had gone into nursing, and, in 1893, had gone to the Lower East Side to devote her life to the healing of the sick and needy. With the financial backing of the German-Jewish philanthropist Jacob H. Schiff, Lillian Wald had established the Henry Street Settlement, where thousands of immigrant Jews were welcomed after their long journey in steerage, where they were fed, housed, and cared for—deloused, dusted off, taught rudimentary English, and otherwise eased through the shock of entering a new culture.

A number of prominent uptown Christians had also become involved, as volunteers, with settlement house work. Just as it had become fashionable for every New York lady to support a “favorite charity,” a favorite settlement house was adopted—the Henry Street, the University Settlement, and so on. The aim of the settlement houses was to form a bridge between the old and new worlds—to instill within an immigrant population a sense of personal purpose and spiritual fulfillment in American democracy. It was true that the settlement houses tended to concentrate their efforts on children and young people. There was a strong feeling that children were often “held back” in the Americanization process by immigrant parents who were too fixed in their Old World ways to adapt to a different society, or too timid or shy to try. But if children could be persuaded to influence parents, the theory went, the parents too might be persuaded to see the light. There were, however, no overt efforts to Christianize children, but only attempts to make them feel comfortable in a predominantly Christian American world. The settlement houses provided courses and lectures on everything from American politics to American sports, from manners to modes of

dress. They were, in other words, trying to supplement and augment what Julia Richman was doing in her schools.

And in many ways they were successful. But there were still stirrings of unrest and distrust among these incursions by Christians and Jews who were “different” among the Jews of the Lower East Side.

Lillian Wald—in her off-duty hours, at least, when not teaching tenement dwellers how to unstop drains, dispose of garbage, deal with rats, or swallow unpleasant-tasting medicines—affected a rather grand and patrician manner, favoring large flowered hats and face veils. Still, she came to be much loved on the Lower East Side, and as her legend grew she was transformed into something of a latter-day Florence Nightingale. Had there been candidates for sainthood in the Jewish faith, she would have been one of them. Not so Miss Richman, whose goals—helping the new immigrant to assimilate—were essentially the same. It was probably the difference in the two women’s personalities that accounted for the different ways in which their activities were regarded. Lillian Wald was soothing, motherly, comforting, a hand-holder. Julia Richman was a whip-cracker, with no patience for sloth and inefficiency, a woman of easily elicited opinions, with no hesitancy about saying exactly what was on her mind, on almost any subject.

And of course the two women’s fields of expertise set them apart, from the point of view of the people they were both trying to serve. Lillian Wald’s concerns were more concrete and immediate—healing the ailments of the human body. Julia Richman’s bailiwick was more subtle and elusive—Americanizing the immigrant mind.

Like Lillian Wald, Julia Richman grew up in a world of moderate affluence. Her family, who had emigrated from Germany two generations earlier, had prospered to the point where they were solid city burghers. Her father owned a paint and glazing business and had, among other things, supplied all the original glass for the old Cooper Institute, a particularly lucrative contract. The family was also very ancestor-proud, and could trace itself back to 1604, to the city of Prague, in what was then Bohemia, and Julia liked to note that her family tree was studded with illustrious physicians, teachers, and rabbis.

She had been born October 12, 1855, the middle child of five, in New York City, where the family lived at 156 Seventh Avenue, in the heart of the

then-fashionable Chelsea district. She had attended P.S. 50 and then, after the family's move to suburban Long Island, Huntington High School. At Huntington, though she got excellent grades, she was known as something of a tomboy and a show-off. With her long skirts pinned between her legs, she would climb tall trees and swing from their branches. She was also a bit of a troublemaker, and was famous for her imperious manner and quick temper. At age twelve she discussed the future with a young contemporary, and the following exchange is reported to have taken place:

The friend: "Julia, I'm pretty, and my father is rich. When I finish high school I'll marry a rich man who will take care of me."

Julia (indignantly): "Well, I am not pretty, my father isn't rich, and I'm not going to marry, but before I die all New York will know my name!"

Growing up in a rigidly disciplinarian Jewish household, Julia and her sisters were instructed in the domestic arts by an exceptionally demanding mother. Each girl, for example, was required to take her turn at setting the table for family dinners—no small chore, considering the fact that the dinners consisted of six courses and involved seven place settings. Once, after setting the table as instructed, Julia called her mother into the dining room to inspect the results. Mrs. Richman circled the big table slowly, checking each item. All the silver and glassware, china and napkins were properly placed, but Julia's mother spotted one discrepancy. The lace tablecloth hung a bit lower on one side of the table than the other. "Julia," said her mother, "take everything off the table, put it all back in the drawers and cupboards where it came from, straighten the cloth and start over." Julia did as she was told. It was a lesson, she liked to recall in later years, that had taught her the importance of "exactness."

She was more independent, however, when it came to choosing a career. Much to her parents' dismay, she announced, at age fourteen, that she intended to become a schoolteacher. Her Victorian father was particularly distressed at this decision, since teaching inevitably meant spinsterhood; in those days, a teacher's pregnancy was grounds for dismissal. But Julia prevailed, and, at fifteen, she enrolled at New York's Normal College.* She graduated in 1872, after completing what was the standard two-year teaching course, but because she was not yet seventeen years old—the minimum age for a teacher then in New York—her license to teach had to be withheld until her birthday.

Julia Richman's first teaching assignment was in a classroom full of boys, where, since many of her pupils were her own age and older, she had certain difficulties instilling the kind of discipline she had in mind. Soon, however, she was transferred to girls' classes, and here she did considerably better. Presently it was being said of Julia Richman that she was "born to command," and as her reputation grew so did her executive ability—and, no doubt, her ego. She began moving steadily upward in the public school system—first to vice-principal of P.S. 73 and then, in 1884, to principal of the girls' department. She was not yet thirty, and she was the youngest principal in the city's history, as well as one of the first women—and the only Jewish woman—principals.

She was already a woman to be reckoned with. As an extracurricular task, she had volunteered to teach the Sabbath school at her family's temple, Emanu-El. Here she found herself obliged to deliver religious instruction to one particularly obstreperous young man. She took her problem to her supervisor, recommending that the youth be suspended or punished. Her supervisor wrung his hands and said to her, "But we can't do anything about *him*. Don't you realize he's the son of one of our richest members?" Miss Richman handed in her resignation on the spot.

In 1903, Julia Richman was appointed district superintendent of schools, and here were more firsts. She was the first woman school superintendent in Manhattan, again one of the youngest of either sex, and again the first Jewish woman to hold such an exalted position in the city's school system. Her prediction was beginning to come true, and all New York was beginning to know her name.

Miss Richman was now regarded with no small amount of awe in educational circles. As a result, she was given the almost unprecedented option of selecting her own school district to supervise, and after considering several others, she made a choice that was as audacious as it was dramatic and newsworthy. She chose the most difficult and challenging district of all: the Lower East Side, the ghetto of Jewish poverty, where older and tougher male superintendents had dreaded being assigned.

Here, under the mantle of her stewardship, would fall the education of some twenty-three thousand children, along with the supervision of six hundred teachers, and the running of fourteen different day and night schools. The "children," meanwhile, were of all ages—from six-year-olds

to men in their twenties and thirties who were just starting to do the equivalent of first-grade work. What made teaching on the Lower East Side especially difficult, of course, was that most of the pupils could not speak English.

Immediately, Julia Richman began to impose upon her district her own personal style. She was an early advocate of “progressive education”—a concept that was then quite new—but her vision went beyond that. She saw the combined role of her schools as extending farther than the limits of the classroom walls, and out into the East Side community at large. She believed that her schools’ influence should be stretched out into the crowded streets and tenements and little shops. She believed that the daily lives of the East Side poor—not just the children but their parents and grandparents as well—should be embraced by the school system. In addition to academic subjects, she decided that her pupils would be instructed in such matters as hygiene, sanitation, table manners and etiquette, the importance of learning American customs, the American legal system, and civil obedience. She even—though the notion shocked her fellow educators whenever she brought it up—toyed with the idea of introducing sex education into the curriculum.

She swept aside everything and anything that smacked of pro forma ritual. “It is much easier,” she once said, “and so much prettier to teach the oath of allegiance to the flag than to teach a community to keep the fire escapes free from encumbrances.” At the same time, she exercised her passion for “exactness,” and her surprise visits of inspection to her schools were dreaded throughout the district. Her beady eye caught everything—improperly washed blackboards, broken pieces of chalk, unsharpened pencils. One of her staff moaned, “Every time she visits a school it is like Yom Kippur!”—the Day of Atonement.

Naturally, with a role as broad and sweeping as the one she assumed for herself, a woman such as Julia Richman was bound to make enemies. And make them she did. But along the path of her career she had also managed to make friends in high places. Under the umbrella of her superintendency, for example, she had gathered the New York Police Department, and one of her targets became community vice. A particular bane was a group of young men who, in the idiom of the day, were called “cadets” (pimps) and who were charged with being in the business of leading young girls into

“lives of degradation.” The cadets and other young hoodlums hung out in and around Seward Park, and Miss Richman was soon spearheading a cleanup of that area. In at least one Richman-inspired raid, two hundred fifty truants from her schools were arrested, along with a quota of cadets. At the same time, she busied herself with other good works. She rented a house in the ghetto and had it converted into a social center for her teachers. She made an incursion into Lillian Wald’s territory, and supervised the conversion of an old ferryboat into a floating sanitarium for consumptives, who were believed to profit from fresh salt air. In her spare time, she helped found the National Council of Jewish Women, an organization whose original purpose was to protect young Jewish girls from white slavers, who, lying in wait for them at the docks, had their own plans for degradation. She was also the first president of the Young Women’s Hebrew Alliance, and for a number of years she edited a magazine called *Helpful Thoughts*. *Helpful Thoughts* was directed at the children of Jewish immigrants, and devoted its contents to what its title promised—helpful thoughts by which children could be Americanized and could assimilate as quickly as possible. She lectured tirelessly, and wrote magazine articles on her educational theories. None other than Louis Marshall—the foremost Jewish lawyer in New York, who, along with Jacob Schiff, was the leader of the German-Jewish community—had praised Julia Richman for her “years of acknowledged usefulness.”

Mr. Marshall, however, was very much an outside observer, and had spent no time on the receiving end of Miss Richman’s “usefulness.” To those who had, she seemed more like a martinet. By 1906, the year of the Adenoids Riot, Miss Richman was very much an authority figure on the Lower East Side, and for this she was in no small way resented. With her clipped, precise speech, her imposing bosom, her carefully marcelled mane of dark red hair, in her spotless white gloves and expensively tailored if understated suits, she was also a commanding physical presence. At fifty-one, she was definitely in her prime, if not at the height of her popularity, and in the wake of the riot there were allegations that somehow her school district could have prevented the misunderstanding; as there had been in the past, there were a number of noisy demands for her replacement or resignation. But Miss Richman moved on to another useful—if unpopular—project: free eye examinations for all her pupils and, if necessary, free

corrective eyeglasses. (Jewish immigrants were particularly fearful of eye examinations; those who failed to pass them at Ellis Island had been refused entry.) As usual, she ignored her critics.

At the time, Julia Richman was living at 330 Central Park West on the Upper West Side—a neighborhood that was directly antipodal to her school district—and her address was certainly a part of her problem. (By contrast, Lillian Wald had settled in a fifth-floor walk-up on Jefferson Street, asking only for the luxury of a private bathtub.) Where Miss Richman lived was also a ghetto of sorts, but it was a ghetto of affluence. The western flank of Central Park and the side streets leading off it had become a wealthy German-Jewish residential district. The development of the passenger elevator had led to the building of a number of tall, imposing apartment houses on the Upper West Side with grand-sounding names, such as the Chatsworth, the Langham, the Dorilton, and the Ansonia, and the apartments they offered were usually spacious with high ceilings, commanding views of the city in all directions, and many servants' rooms. New York's Christian upper crust might still prefer their Upper East Side town houses, but the city's German-Jewish elite—historically leery of investing in real estate—tended to choose apartment living. (It was not until many years later that luxury apartment houses were built on the Upper East Side.)

At addresses like Julia Richman's lived families who had been poor immigrants themselves a little more than a generation earlier, but who now wore top hats and frock coats to their Wall Street offices. In the years during and after the Civil War, former rural foot peddlers had made the great transition into banking, retailing, and manufacturing. Their names were Guggenheim, Lehman, Straus, Sachs, Altman, Loeb, and Seligman. For years, the little knot of families had intermarried with one another, and by the early 1900s they composed a tight network of cousins and double cousins. Within the group, of course, there were stratifications. The German Jews of Frankfurt origin considered themselves superior to the Jews of Hamburg, but the Jews of Frankfurt *and* Hamburg considered themselves superior to those of Munich, or anywhere in the south. The Seligmans thought of themselves as better than the Strauses, since the Seligmans had

become international bankers while the Strauses, of Macy's, had remained "in trade." The Guggenheims, who were Swiss Jews, were a problem. They were the richest of the "crowd," but they were considered socially somewhat gauche. Julia Richman's family belonged very definitely to this small set, which called itself the "One Hundred," to distinguish itself from the Christian "Four Hundred" of Mrs. William Astor. Julia's sisters, furthermore, had all made proper in-the-group marriages—Addie Richman to an Altman, whose family ran what was considered to be New York's finest department store, and Bertha Richman to a Proskauer, whose family included prominent lawyers.

By 1906, the dividing line between "uptown" (German) Jews and "Lower East Side" (Eastern European) Jews had become the source of much hard feeling, and Julia Richman was, in both manner and appearance, very uptown. Her uptownness was assumed to account for her heavy emphasis on discipline and correctness, and for her high-handed habit of involving herself in matters—such as the police force—that had previously been considered out of the jurisdiction of the schools. Lillian Wald at least seemed sympathetic to the East Siders' most pressing needs. Julia Richman seemed more interested in getting the East Siders to conform to her own exacting standards, in imposing her own toplofty values, in changing centuries-old ways of thinking, seeing, living, being.

To complicate matters further, the Lower East Side had become something of a fashionable cause, or Cause, in New York City. Rich Christian ladies, such as Mrs. Oliver H. P. Belmont and Miss Anne Morgan (sister of J. P.), made sable-clad forays into the Lower East Side to dispense their Christian charity to the "poor, deserving Jews." These Lady Bountifuls were distrusted and suspected of being missionaries bent on conversion, and it was hard to distinguish Julia Richman, in her stone marten scarves, from one of these.

It was also suspected that her efforts at uplifting were—like those of her family and social set—self-serving, and based essentially on a bad case of embarrassment. The Eastern European Jews were especially sensitive on this point, and with good reason. Julia Richman's values were seen as those of the wealthy few, and she seemed to be trying to force-feed her notions to the hungry masses, who, in their own eyes, already had perfectly acceptable standards of their own, which they saw no need to change. Marching into

their midst with her pronouncements on the importance of clean fingernails and lessons on how to curtsy, this uptown woman not only came from enemy territory, she also symbolized capitalism, a force that traditionally oppressed rather than uplifted the poor. She lived on a street that was already being called the Jewish Fifth Avenue.

On top of everything else, she represented a form of Judaism that the Eastern Europeans did not fully understand and were not ready to accept. She actually practiced a religion very different from theirs. As early as 1845, thirty-three young German-Jewish immigrants who had arrived in Manhattan just a few years before banded together to establish a Reform congregation, which they named Emanu-El. The very term “Reform,” of course, indicated that these Germans felt that there was something about traditional Judaism that needed updating and correcting. Reform had had its seeds in Germany, but had come into full flower in the United States, where it was regarded—by the German-American Jews, at least—as an essential step toward assimilation into the American culture.

Reform Judaism was touted as “the dominion of reason over blind and bigoted faith,” but it really represented the new dominion of America over the Old World. Among the revisions advocated by Reform was that houses of worship no longer be called synagogues, but instead be known as temples. The principal day of worship was shifted from Saturday to Sunday, to conform with the religious habits of the American majority. The use of Hebrew was virtually dropped from the order of service, in favor of English. Keeping kosher households was deemed both archaic and impractical—as well as un-American. (The great American leader of the Reform movement, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, had shocked the Jews of Cincinnati by putting on a banquet at which shrimp and crawfish were among the delicacies offered.) In fact, inside the new Reform temples, with their pulpits and pews and chandeliers, where hatted women worshiped alongside unhatted men and not in separate curtained galleries, the atmosphere was often indistinguishable from that of an American Christian church. The strictly Orthodox, kosher-keeping Russians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Hungarians viewed all these developments as examples—sinister and shocking ones—of how quickly the faith could erode in America if one were not ever watchful.

In Russia, rabbis had long warned their congregations that Westernization of the religion would spell its undoing. Steeped in centuries of Orthodoxy, the Men of the Book had spent their days bowed at the eastern walls of their synagogues, endlessly studying the Talmud, dissecting its exhortations, preparing commentaries on the Holy Word, and commentaries upon commentaries—often at the expense of any other kind of labor or scholarship. In most Eastern European congregations, the reading of secular books had been banned—for how could the words of mere men be allowed to compete with the Word of God? From this had grown the belief, which the Eastern Europeans had brought with them to America, that work other than Talmudic scholarship was unworthy of the Jew, that poverty was the pious Jew’s lot, that pursuit of Mammon was unrighteous. That the uptown German-Jewish businessmen had not only grown rich, but had also tailored their religion to fit more easily into the Christian mode in the process, seemed sheer apostasy. To the Germans, who saw themselves as “Americanized,” this attitude merely seemed unenlightened—backward, ignorant.

Simple statistics also offered an explanation for the increasing East-West, German-Russian mutual antipathy. In 1870, the number of Jews in New York City had been estimated at eighty thousand, or less than nine percent of the city’s population. With the exception of a handful of crusty, aristocratic, and ingeniously interrelated Sephardic families who had been living in the city since the mid-seventeenth century, most of these families had come originally from Germany—driven out not so much by religious persecution (though there was some of that) as by taxation and the threat of conscription into the German armies. Since their numbers were small, their arrival in New York had been a nonevent, and their presence in the predominantly Christian city went relatively unnoticed. They lived very quietly, almost deliberately so, preferring inconspicuousness to ostentation. They worked hard and, in the process, had gained a reputation for probity. As bankers, they had established valuable international connections with such powerful British and European firms as Hambro’s and the House of Rothschild. During the Civil War, while amassing considerable fortunes of their own, they had helped establish the Union’s credit overseas at a time when President Lincoln’s treasury desperately needed it.

As merchants, the Strauses of Macy's, the Rosenwalds of Sears, Roebuck, and the Altmans of Altman's had provided the city with high-quality merchandise at fair prices. As publishers, the related Ochses and Sulzbergers offered a newspaper that was responsible, even essential. As families, they kept to themselves, and if they had any desire to storm the gates of Mrs. Astor's Christian circle they were too proud to show it. (Indeed, the German Jews often left the impression that *theirs* was the more difficult social sphere to storm.) They projected just the opposite wish—to leave the established structure of Christian society exactly as they had found it. The German Jews, in other words, were assimilationists only *up to a point*, and had prudently not tried to push beyond that point. It might be added, too, that many of the German Jews were blond, fair-skinned, and blue-eyed. In appearance, they did not stand out against the prevailing look of the population. They flowed pleasantly—not with it, but alongside it.

And yet, by 1906, nearly ninety thousand Jews were arriving in New York City *every year*, most of them from Russia and Poland. (Because the Russians and the Poles seemed indistinguishable, all these immigrants were grouped as “Russians.”) Now the Jewish population of the city stood at close to a million, or roughly twenty-five percent of the total population, and by 1915 there would be nearly a million and a half, or twenty-eight percent. In sheer numbers, the Jews of New York seemed to be overtaking the non-Jewish population. And, massed together on the Lower East Side, they were nothing if not conspicuous.

They arrived looking like bindle stiffs—hobos with their worldly possessions, slung over their shoulders in gunny sacks. The men were swarthy skinned, often bearded and side-curved. They were poor, and looked it: ill-clothed, ill-shod, often sickly. They were nearly always in need of baths and fumigation—and smelled it. They looked, and were, frightened—and what is more alarming than a look of terror in a stranger's eyes? There was something even more off-putting in their collective appearance: they looked not only fearful, but defiant, wary, suspicious. They looked poor, and yet they did not look *abject*, the way Americans tend to think poor people *ought* to look. The immigrant Jews from Eastern European lands conformed to no previous immigrant image. As a group, they were not beggars. There were no outstretched Jewish hands asking for alms. At the same time, though poor, they seemed curiously proud. There

were certain means of livelihood that, though readily available to them, they were unwilling to perform. Immigrant Italians, Irish, and Swedes lined up for jobs helping to dig the tunnels for New York's subway system, and lay its tracks; not the Jews. Irish girls happily took positions as cooks, parlor maids, and children's nurses for rich families, but not the Jews. Scotsmen worked as coachmen, footmen, and chauffeurs, and Englishmen worked as butlers, but the Jews would have none of these occupations. It was not that they had no taste for hard, physical labor. Jewish newsboys raced through the streets night and day delivering papers; Jewish girls toiled long hours in sweatshops working at sewing machines, and brought piecework home with them at night. A Jewish youth seemed to have no reluctance to work as a singing waiter in a restaurant; why did he refuse to buttle in a rich man's house? Why would he not join the police force or the fire department the way the Irish did? Was mere something innately repugnant about wearing a *uniform*? It was all very perplexing. The phrase "doing one's own thing" had not yet come into the language, but that was what the Eastern European Jews seemed bent on doing, and through it all, they seemed buoyed up by some inner strength or fire. They were feisty, fractious, independent, argumentative—bickering shrilly and incessantly with one another. They seemed almost to wear a collective chip on the shoulder.

To make understanding these newcomers more difficult, they had names that were unpronounceable. How was one to deal with a name like Yaikef Rabinowski, or Pesheh Luboschitz? They spoke a language, Yiddish, that sounded a little like German but was written in Hebrew characters—backwards, from right to left. Even the German Jews described Yiddish as a "vulgar jargon," despite the fact that Yiddish, which is Judeo-German, was a language comprehensible to native Germans, from the lowliest peasant to the members of the kaiser's court. In short, these new arrivals appeared exactly to fit Emma Lazarus's description of immigrants in "The New Colossus," which was inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor—"wretched refuse" of Europe's teeming shore. And they kept coming.

The newspapers, reporting on this strange new breed of immigrants, did not help speed their welcome. The Eastern European Jews were "ignorant" and "primitive," and "the dregs of society." Whenever the newspapers ventured into the Lower East Side—which they did periodically with

scented handkerchiefs pressed to the journalistic nostrils—there emerged stories of “horrible conditions in the Jewish quarter,” and of overcrowding in filthy tenements, vivid descriptions of vermin, garbage, marital disorders, insanity, violence, gangs of “cigarette-smoking street toughs” (cigarette smoking was regarded as a certain sign of depravity), alcoholism, starvation, prostitution, and crime. The newspapers were soon speaking of the Lower East Side in terms of “the Jewish problem,” and it was a problem the self-respecting, quasi-assimilated German Jews could have done without. The Eastern Europeans were giving all Jews a bad name, and they threatened the Germans’ carefully acquired “Americanization.”

A generation or so earlier, the German-Jewish immigrants had started out as peddlers, and the later-arrived Russians had come to the logical conclusion that peddling was a good Jewish way to earn a living in America. But times had changed somewhat. The Germans—usually on foot, but sometimes with the luxury of a horse and wagon—had done their peddling in the rural reaches of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the South, where they provided a much-needed service to farm families who lived miles always from the nearest villages and stores. The nineteenth-century Jewish peddler with his wares—thimbles, watches, underwear—had been a welcome figure on the horizon. At the various farms where he stopped he was often given food and shelter and other forms of hospitality. But now, in the twentieth century, thanks to men like Julius Rosenwald and his invention—the Sears, Roebuck mail-order catalogue—plus the introduction by the U.S. Post Office of rural free delivery in 1903 and parcel post ten years later, the rural foot peddler had become obsolete. So the new Jewish peddler now took to the streets of New York.

This new breed of peddlers, with their ramshackle carts—most of them homemade or adapted from cast-off baby buggies—peddled mostly to each other. Certainly no uptowners came to the Lower East Side in search of pushcart bargains, though occasional tourists ventured down just for a look at the raucous scene. The Jewish Lower East Side, furthermore, was a strictly defined area: between Houston Street on the north, Monroe Street on the south, the Bowery on the west, and the East River docks and warehouses on the east. These bordering streets were literally battle lines. To the south of the Monroe Street boundary—or frontier—lived the hostile Irish. West and north lived the equally hostile Italians and German

Catholics. As more immigrants arrived, much as the “Jewish quarter” tried to press outward, the more tightly it became compressed. Its narrow streets contained not only tenements but synagogues, factories, warehouses, and shops, and the area contained only one tiny park. Soon this wedge-shaped piece of real estate had more than seven hundred inhabitants to the acre and, by the turn of the century, it was reported that the population density of this strip of land had exceeded that of the worst, most crowded sections of Bombay. Into this scene of extreme congestion pushed the pushcarts. The Lower East Side became a massive traffic jam of peddlers’ pushcarts, laden with everything from soiled rags to fresh chicken soup. One didn’t stroll on the Lower East Side; one shouldered one’s way through the pushcarts and the massive crowd of pushing humanity. Vehicular traffic was impossible, and the East Side air was redolent of the commingled odors of pushcart merchandise. By 1906, the pushcarts had become a civic nuisance, a “disgrace” to the great city. They were even, by a jump of the imagination, made to sound morally dangerous. Because the pushcarts filled the streets from one side to the other, so the argument went, Jewish youngsters were deprived of the only outdoor spaces they might have otherwise had for play. Thus deprived, it followed, the Jewish youth turned naturally to crime, the girls to prostitution, and it was true that in an area so tightly packed with people, Jewish prostitutes did offer their services out-of-doors.

And the pushcart scene did seem—to the uninitiated outsider, at least—to be full of fury and violence. Again, this had a great deal to do with the fiery and passionate Russian personality. The Germans, as a group, were staid and taciturn. In their businesses, deals were concluded with a nod or a handshake. The Russians, by contrast, were noisy, brash, assertive, and high-strung. They shook their fists and beat their breasts to make their points. Unhappy with a price, they didn’t merely shrug; they wailed. And since many of the pushcart vendors were women, who became the family breadwinners in order to leave their husbands to the higher calling of Talmudic study, this added shrillness to the already high decibel level in the streets. When not hawking their wares through Hester Street at the top of their lungs, the vendors seemed to spend their time vociferously disagreeing with one another in the little East Side coffeehouses. While physical fighting was rare, there seemed to be an excessive amount of verbal conflict—all of it, from the German point of view, quite unseemly.

The Russians had also developed their own brand of grim, self-mocking street humor, which the Germans found more than a little vulgar. Bits of doggerel were set to music and sung in the streets and coffeehouses, reflecting the Russians' way of life and their wry views of it. One such, translated from the Yiddish, went:

*Rent money and landlord,
Rent money and landlord,
Rent money and landlord,
You have to pay your rent.
When the landlord comes,
you doff your hat;
Won't pay your rent?
Then out with your furniture!*

At the same time, the Yiddish theater was filled with agony, passion, and wild laughter at the Jewish comedians. Uptown, of course, the Germans preferred to be entertained by the calming strains of Strauss, Mendelssohn, and Mozart.

A final difference between the two breeds of Jews was political. The Russians had arrived with their souls afire with socialism, with the stirrings of the Bolshevik movement, and were already struggling to form trade guilds and unions to do battle with the "bosses." But the Germans by now were contented capitalists, conservative supporters of President Theodore Roosevelt. The Russians appeared to pose a real threat to the American way of life as the Germans had learned to enjoy it, and it seemed essential that this Jewish radicalism be nipped in the bud, that the Russians be retrained in the "proper" way of American political thinking. To this end as well, Julia Richman and her ilk had set their high-minded goals.

Of course, on the surface, it might seem that it would have been easier on the Germans if they had simply ignored the increasingly embarrassing presence of their very visible coreligionists from Eastern Europe—to have disowned these people who claimed to be their spiritual cousins. And no doubt there were many who would have preferred to do just that. But, led

by men like Schiff and Marshall, who argued that the Talmudic principle of *zedakah*, or righteousness, was involved, the German-Jewish uptowners, with an almost audible collective sigh, decided to take up the philanthropic burden of the unpopular unfortunates. The most palpable initial problem appeared to be urban overcrowding, and for a while the United Hebrew Charities and the Baron de Hirsch Fund—a \$2,400,000 trust established by the German capitalist for the specific purpose of helping Jewish immigrants to settle peacefully in America—embarked on several programs designed to persuade Europeans to settle elsewhere than in New York City.

These organizations, trying their best to sound charitable, pointed out that the “country air” in New Jersey and the Catskill Mountains, or even farther away on the western plains, would surely benefit the immigrants. A plan was devised whereby boats carrying Jewish immigrants would be diverted to the Southwest, to such Gulf ports as Galveston. But nothing quite worked. The Russian Jews were an urbanized people—even the rural *shtetls* were organized as tightly packed minicities—and were unused to farming, physically and psychologically ill-suited to becoming cowboys or ranchers. Besides, they wanted to settle where their own like-speaking and like-thinking friends and kin had settled, and that was inevitably New York.

In 1888, as a result of the Germans’ charitable efforts, two hundred Jews were actually shipped back to Europe in cattle boats. But what were two hundred out of hundreds of thousands? Merely a tiny dent in what was increasingly described in warlike terms as an “invasion.” Uptowners, more and more alarmed, attempted to have laws passed in Washington to restrain further immigration, and Public Health Service standards for admission to the United States became more and more stringent. But the tide could not be stopped.

The only solution, it seemed, was for the Germans to try, if possible, to reshape these shabby people along what the Germans considered acceptable lines. The United Hebrew Charities began providing free lodging, meals, medical care, and counseling for new immigrants. It sponsored uplift-intended lectures and classes—on the English language, on American morals, manners, modes of dress, on the dangers of socialism—all designed to teach the poor Russians the unwisdom of their former ways. To support these programs, the Germans dug deeply—if at times begrudgingly—into their pockets because, as usual, Louis Marshall and Jacob Schiff were

setting the stiff-upper-lip, noblesse oblige example, and insisting that others do the same. When refugees overflowed Castle Garden* and the rooming houses nearby, the New York commissioner of emigration opened the Wards Island buildings, and Schiff personally contributed ten thousand dollars for an auxiliary barracks. Together, Schiff and Marshall established small-loan societies to help the immigrants get into businesses other than pushcart vending.

But of course gratitude is a notoriously difficult emotion to arouse in the breasts of charity's recipients, particularly when the gift is bestowed in the spirit of rebuke. And the most galling, to the Germans, thing about their philanthropy was that the Russians didn't seem grateful at all. In fact, when they accepted it, they seemed to accept it resentfully, angrily. Given out of hard feelings, it was taken with feelings that were even harder.

The fact was that the conditions on the Lower East Side that the Germans found so "appalling" did not seem so bad to the Russians. That the Germans should have judged them so the Russians at first found puzzling, and finally found infuriating. To be sure, living conditions were not that much better than they had been in the old country, but they were not that much worse, either. In their urban ghettos and in the *shtetls* of the Pale of Settlement—that 386,000-square-mile area stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea, which included the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Lithuania, and much of Poland—the Russians had spent generations learning how to live with overcrowding, and how to live, as it were, in layers and in shifts. A people can deal with a lack of elbow room in one of two ways: by lashing out at one's neighbors, or by huddling against them for warmth and comfort like mountaineers lost in a winter blizzard. The Russians had found it practical to do the latter. With the resilience and ingenuity that often emerge among a people confronted by a common enemy, the Russian Jews had learned to adapt their lives to uncomfortable situations, to turn disadvantages into advantages.

There was something to be said, after all, for three generations of a family—from frail grandparents to nursing infants—all living together under one low roof. You learned to know very well whom you could trust and whom you could not. There might be family bickering, but at least you were bickering with someone you *knew*. There might be little privacy, but at least there was intimacy. Even lovemaking was an experience shared by the

entire family. Chores and responsibilities could be parceled out according to talents, and the occasional presence in a family of a *luftmensch*—literally, someone who lives on air and does no work at all—or a *shlemiel* could be tolerated. In getting to know your neighbors only too well, you also got to know whom you could turn to in time of need, and whom you could not. To settle disputes, there was always the rabbi, with his book of answers to every question, and his infinite wisdom.

What mattered about America was not that the kitchen sink was also the family bath- and washtub, or that an entire tenement was served by a single common toilet that often didn't work. What mattered was that one no longer lived in dread of the gloved fist pounding on the door at night, of one's barely adolescent son being conscripted into the czar's army, never to be seen again, or of being forced to stand by helplessly as one's mother or sister was raped and disemboweled by drunken cossack soldiers. No wonder the Russian Jews had learned to dread the coming of the Christmas holidays, and had carried that dread with them to America. That season, and again at Easter, was when the czar's soldiers were handed bonuses and sent off on leave and when, as like as not, they would decide to charge, in an orgy of violence, into the Jewish quarter. No wonder the Lower East Side Jews were baffled to learn that the uptown Germans, increasingly, celebrated Christmas with toys under a tree.

At least, in New York, the old uncertainties were in the past. It was for this reason that the raucous cries of the pushcart peddlers had a curiously joyous ring. It was this sort of feeling that, years later, would prompt Senator Jacob Javits to say that, having had a mother who was a pushcart vendor, he had always felt himself to be a member of a particular elite—of a choosy and exclusive club. The strong emotional attachment that East Side families felt toward their individual pushcarts was something that the uptown Jews simply could not understand.

German-Jewish anti-Semitism had begun to express itself when Rabbi Kaufmann Kohler of Temple Emanu-El, touting German superiority, declared from his pulpit that German roots meant “peace, liberty, progress, and civilization,” and that German Jews were freed of the “shackles of medievalism,” that their minds were “impregnated with German sentiment

... no longer Oriental.” By a queer rationale, the Germans began to speak of the Russians as something akin to the Yellow Peril, and Russian “Orientalism” along with bolshevism became a repeated theme. The German-Jewish uptown press echoed this, speaking of “un-American ways” among the “wild Asiatics,” and referring to the Russians as “a piece of Oriental antiquity in the midst of an ever-progressive Occidental Civilization.”

The *American Hebrew* asked: “Are we waiting for the natural process of assimilation between Orientalism and Americanism? This will perhaps never take place.” It was a paraphrase of Kipling’s “East is East, and West is West, and never the twain ...” The *Hebrew Standard*, another journal that printed the uptown view, put it even more strongly: “The thoroughly acclimated American Jew ... has no religious, social or intellectual sympathies with them. He is closer to the Christian sentiment around him than to the Judaism of these miserable, darkened Hebrews.” Because many Russian and Polish names ended in *ky* or *ki*, the mocking terms of “kikey” and “kike” came into use—a German-Jewish contribution to the American vernacular.*

Miss Julia Richman, meanwhile, continued to sail undaunted through these troubled waters, head held high, serenely convinced of her own infallibility. With her hair sweeping elaborately upward from her wide forehead in carefully measured rows of waves, she had emerged unscathed from the Adenoids Riot, and continued, relentlessly, in her efforts to homogenize the East Siders into the American mainstream. Her new target became the Hebrew language. As early as 1894, she had drafted a report to the Hebrew Free School Association, urging that the teaching of Hebrew be discontinued, or at least de-emphasized, arguing that one new language was sufficient for an immigrant child to have to struggle with. It was a sensible enough point. But it was lost on immigrant parents, who had always stressed the teaching of Hebrew in their religious schools. How else would a Jewish child be able to read the sacred texts? Miss Richman was unmoved.

For her stands on matters like this, Julia Richman was vilified—to the extent that many of her more important contributions, revolutionary for her

time, were overlooked. She had, for example, inaugurated special classes for retarded students. She instituted regular meetings between parents and teachers, and helped to organize parent groups on a school-by-school basis long before anyone had heard of the PTA.

Immigrant children obviously faced special problems in terms of learning. If, for example, a fourteen-year-old boy, fresh off the boat and knowing no English, was enrolled in a public school, he might easily be placed in a class of first-graders who were learning the alphabet and their first sums. Needless to say, the fourteen-year-old felt miserably awkward and out of place. Miss Richman looked for new and imaginative solutions to such situations. Under her aegis, special classes were set up for cases like this. The fourteen-year-old would thus spend three or four months in a special class learning the rudiments of English, and then be shifted to a class with his own age group. Miss Richman also knew that children learn from other children, and so youngsters who had mastered the language were enlisted to help instruct those who had not. It was a method that worked as well as any; that is, those who were eager to learn did very well, and those who were not did not.

Her approach to the first stumbling block, language, was clear-headed and commonsensical. A 1907 syllabus for English classes in Miss Richman's district read:

Spoken language is an imitative art—first teaching should be oral, have children speak.

Teach children words by having them work with and describe objects.

Words should be illustrated by means of pictures, toys, etc.

Presentation of material should keep pace with the pupil's growth in power.

A bright pupil should be seated next to one less bright, one should teach the other.

In copying, the purpose is language, not penmanship.

By 1905, ninety-five percent of the students in the thirty-eight schools of the Lower East Side were Jewish, and in at least one school in Miss Richman's district—P.S. 75 on Norfolk Street—the student body was one hundred percent Jewish. It was perhaps natural, then, that Miss Richman should have instructed her teachers—a great many of whom were Irishwomen—in what was “special” or “different” about a Jewish child. On the plus side, she reminded her staff, were such traits as the Jew's idealism and “thirst for knowledge.” But she also cited “other characteristics” of Jews in general and Russians in particular that teachers might encounter, and might find alien and off-putting. Among these were “occasional overdevelopment of mind at expense of body; keen intellectualism often leads toward impatience at slow progress; extremely radical; many years of isolation and segregation give rise to irritability and supersensitivity; little interest in physical sports; frank and openminded approach in intellectual matters, especially debatable questions.”

In order to encourage “interest in physical sports,” and to try to keep the children off the crowded streets, Miss Richman's schools and playgrounds were kept open on afternoons, evenings, and over weekends. Because she felt that the Eastern European Jewish mentality was more pragmatic than reflective, she introduced a course called “Practical Civics,” which studied the way the American city, state, and federal governments actually worked, and replaced standard courses in American history—with their emphasis on memorizing the dates of wars and the names of generals and the birthdates of Presidents—with this. One point of Practical Civics was to show that American capitalism and the free-enterprise system actually *worked*.

Miss Richman's East Side students were also instructed in manners, morals, hygiene, etiquette, and grooming, and understandably, these lessons were less palatable to her students. In a world where meals at home were seldom eaten with more than a single wooden spoon, it was hard to grasp the importance of knowing which fork to use at an elaborate table setting. (Years later, to be sure, many former students educated under the Richman regime would ruefully admit that they were grateful to her for their knowledge of how to conduct themselves in a more polite society than had once been theirs.) On her periodic surprise visits to her schools, Miss Richman was a stickler for little politenesses and courtesies, and the children would be put through their paces: “Good morning, Miss Rich man.

How are you today?... Fine, thank you.... Yes, ma'am.... No, ma'am.... Yes, please.... Thank you very much....”

Richman students were expected not only to learn English, but also to learn to speak it correctly, another onerous chore for the immigrants, who had difficulty with certain English constructions. There is, for example, no equivalent in either Russian or Polish for the English *ng* sound, and in both languages consonants preceding vowels are given hard emphasis. Thus, words like *singing* and *belonging* tended to come out as *sin-ging* and *belon-ging*. There was also trouble with the *th* sound, which exists only in Greek, English, and Castillian Spanish, so that *this* came out as *dis*, and *cloth* as *clot*. Nor is there an equivalent to the letter *w* in the Russian alphabet, so that *water*, for example, was pronounced *vater*. The New York speech that Americans today call a “Brooklyn accent” is directly descended from the immigrants of Eastern Europe, but Miss Richman’s students were not supposed to talk that way. There were actual cases when her students were denied their diplomas until they could properly say “Long Island,” and not “Lon Gisland.”

The phrase “de facto segregation” did not exist in 1906, but Miss Richman realized that this was the situation that existed in her mostly-Jewish schools. And in determining to do something about it she raised more hackles. In an effort to achieve a greater ethnic balance, a proposal was drawn up to bus children from the East Side to less crowded schools on the West Side. Reaction to the idea of busing was strong even then, and there was an immediate angry outcry from Jewish parents. The *Jewish Daily Forward* inveighed against Miss Richman, pointing out that she was a German Jew, of the enemy camp, who was bent on destroying the fabric of East Side family life. East Side parents, it seemed, felt much more comfortable sending their children to schools that were close to home, and where they could be with other Jewish children. It made the whole immigration and Americanization process seem much less terrifying. The busing proposal failed, but it left a great deal of anger and distrust in its wake.

Nonetheless, Julia Richman’s name was known throughout the city, and her position seemed secure. In 1908, however, she very nearly came to grief. That was the year when, perhaps unwisely, she had the temerity to step boldly outside the realm of public education into the raffish world of

the pushcart vendors. This was the most sensitive of areas, and however well-intentioned she may have been, she demonstrated that she did not understand one simple fact of Jewish immigrant life: the synagogues and the Hebrew language might be the spiritual bulwarks of the Lower East Side, but the pushcarts had become the immigrants' temporal anchor in the New World.

By then, of course, many New Yorkers would have agreed with her that the Jewish pushcarts were an abomination and a blight on the city's landscape. And even before Miss Richman decided to deal with the problem single-handedly, there had been efforts made to bring it under control. The city required that each pushcart vendor purchase a fifteen-dollar license, and it issued only four thousand of these licenses at a time. But at least ten thousand additional unlicensed vendors were plying their wares about the streets, and as a rule, a few dollars in bribes could be counted on to persuade the police to look the other way. At the same time, there was a great deal of worried talk in the press about "Jewish crime in the streets," though the stories failed to mention that a vast majority of the arrests were for pushcart violations.

In 1908, Julia Richman went to Police Commissioner General Theodore Bingham and demanded that he vigorously enforce the pushcart license laws. At first, Bingham was reluctant. "You don't want to be too hard on the poor devils," he told her. "They have to make a living." Miss Richman replied frostily, "I say, if the poor devils cannot make a living without violating our laws, the immigration department should send them back to the country from which they came."

Her retort was widely quoted, and immediately the East Side erupted in fury. Considering the powerful emotional attachment of the vendors to their carts, she had struck a raw nerve. Immediately, Miss Richman's resignation was again demanded, to which Miss Richman replied, as usual, that she had no intention of resigning. Once more it was declared that Miss Richman should be reassigned to a school district as far from the East Side as possible. But Miss Richman was nothing if not stubborn. Instead of trying to temper her inflammatory statement, or retracting it, she repeated it, insisting that pushcart violation was grounds for deportation.

At this point, Julia Richman might well have been in fear of her physical well-being if, by sheer coincidence, an event had not occurred that managed

to deflect the criticism from her to the shoulders of another scapegoat. An article appearing in the *North American Review*, titled “Foreign Criminals in New York” and written by none other than Commissioner Bingham himself, stated that, though Jews comprised only twenty-five percent of New York’s population, they accounted for fifty percent of the city’s crime. Among other things, Bingham said:

It is not astonishing that with a million Hebrews, mostly Russian, in the city (one-quarter of the population) perhaps half of the criminals should be of that race when we consider that ignorance of the language, more particularly among men not physically fit for hard labor, is conducive to crime.... They are burglars, firebugs, pickpockets and highway robbers—when they have the courage; but though all crime is their province, pocket-picking is the one to which they take most naturally....

On the heels of these incendiary remarks, all Miss Richman’s deportation comments were forgotten, and the focus of East Side fury became Theodore Bingham. It was recalled that this was not the first time the commissioner had made anti-Semitic statements and allegations. The previous year, in an article for *Harper’s Weekly*, he had claimed that twelve hundred out of two thousand pictures in his department’s rogues’ gallery were of Jews.

While the Yiddish newspapers on the Lower East Side fumed in print over the commissioner’s statements, demanding that Bingham be fired, there was an almost eerie silence from the drawing rooms and offices of such wealthy uptown Jews as Jacob Schiff and Louis Marshall. Where, the *Jewish Daily News*—or the *Tageblatt*, as it was known in Yiddish*—wanted to know, were the voices of these powerful men who claimed leadership of the Jewish community? Years earlier, the *Tageblatt* reminded its readers, in 1877, when one of the uptowners’ own German kind, the banker Joseph Seligman, had with his family been turned away from Saratoga’s Grand Union Hotel (where the Seligmans had vacationed for years) on the grounds that the hotel no longer wanted Jewish guests, there had been such a public outcry nationwide among the Jewish mighty and well-heeled that the hotel had been forced out of business. Where, in the

face of this latest insult, was the outcry now? Was the difference the fact that the maligned this time were *Russian* Jews?

Schiff and Marshall, it seemed, preferred to resolve the matter without an outcry—or to assume an ostrich attitude in the hopes that, if ignored, the matter would go away. Finally, however, and under pressure, Marshall did issue a rather cautious statement. He did not, he said, wish to refute Bingham's remarks "by any sensational methods." Instead, he had met privately with New York's Mayor George McLellan and the deputy police commissioner. A carefully worded retraction was worked out, and delivered to the press a few days later. In it, Commissioner Bingham admitted that his statistics were in error. Rather lamely, he blamed the mistake on unnamed "sources" outside his office who had got their numbers wrong—though why the police commissioner's office would not have correct crime statistics at its fingertips, and would have needed to turn to outside sources, was left unexplained. The outside sources had turned out to be unreliable. The commissioner was very sorry about the whole thing.

But on the East Side the Jewish press was far from mollified. As the *Tageblatt* remarked, the East Side was proud of "a Jacob Schiff and a Louis Marshall," and considered these men a credit to American Jewry. But the East Side also wanted "self-recognition.... We wish to give our famous Jews their honored place in an American Jewish organization in the measure that they have earned it. But we wish them to work with us and not over us." The *Tageblatt* also said, "We have a million Jews in New York. Where is their power? Where is their organization? Where are their representatives?"

Here, of course, was a pivotal question. How *could* such a large and diverse population organize and form any sort of coalition of power? It was not just a question of German versus Russian, or uptown versus Lower East Side. The Lower East Side itself was seething with differences and factions. Some of the populace were Russians, some were Poles, some Hungarians, some Slavs, some Latvians, some Lithuanians, some Czechs, some Galicians. They all spoke Yiddish, but in accents so varied that it was often difficult for one group to understand another. The Russians disliked the Poles, the Poles disliked the Russians, the Russians and Poles collectively disliked the Lithuanians, and everybody who was not Hungarian found the Hungarians toplofty and condescending. In the *Jewish Daily Forward*, the

letters-to-the-editor page, called Bintel Briefs, became a kind of forum for dispute, and one 1906 letter—signed simply “The Russian Mother”—tells just part of the story:

Dear Mr. Editor:

My own daughter, who was born in Russia, married a Hungarian-Jewish young man. She adopted all the Hungarian customs and not a trace of a Russian-Jewish woman remained with her. This would not have been so bad. The trouble is, now that she is first-class Hungarian, she laughs at the way I talk, at my manners, and even the way we cook.... Not an evening passes without ... mockery and ridicule.

I therefore want to express my opinion that Russian Jews and Hungarian Jews should not intermarry; a Russian Jew and an Hungarian Jew are in my opinion two different worlds and one does not and cannot understand the other.

Some East Side Jews were budding Marxists, some were socialists, some were Zionists. Some were Orthodox, some were atheists. The Jews of Warsaw could not see eye to eye with those from Krakow. Already the phrase was being quoted: “If you get two Jews together, you have three arguments.” Some European Jews were already declaring themselves thoroughly disillusioned with the United States, cursing America for what they saw as an overly legalistic society. As one East Sider complained, “In the old country, if you did something that was wrong, the policeman would tell you that it was wrong. If you said you did not know that it was wrong, the policeman would say, ‘Well, now you know, so don’t do it again.’ Here, if you do something that is wrong, they just arrest you and fine you or throw you into jail.” The American concept that ignorance of the law is no excuse appeared, to many immigrants, cruel and unjust.

The only possible means of unifying all the unhappy and disputatious elements on the Lower East Side seemed to be to get them all somehow to embrace America as an abstract ideal, to make them feel that they were loyal Americans first, Jews second. It was a large order—large, even, for a woman of Julia Richman’s stubborn, iron-willed ambitions.

To the disinterested outside visitor, the Lower East Side in the early 1900s would have appeared utterly chaotic, and nothing been foreseen to come out of it except disaster—or, at the very least, some sort of violent social upheaval or revolution. And yet that is not what happened at all. Instead, out of it came artists, writers, lawyers, politicians, entertainers, and businessmen, like Irving Berlin, Jacob Javits, Samuel Goldwyn, David Sarnoff, Jacob Epstein, Eddie Cantor, Danny Kaye, and Edward G. Robinson. Out of this and similar ghettos came a premiere American architect named Emery Roth, a fashion photographer named Richard Avedon, a designer named Ralph Lauren, a cosmetics queen named Helena Rubinstein, a movie mogul named Louis B. Mayer, another named Adolph Zukor, and a liquor tycoon named Samuel Bronfman—and many, many, more, including a pretty New York girl named Betty Joan Perske, who, after being educated at the high school on Second Avenue and Sixty-seventh Street that was eventually named in Julia Richman’s honor, went on to Hollywood and Broadway stardom as Lauren Bacall.

*Later to be renamed Hunter College.

*Until Ellis Island was opened as an immigration center in 1892, immigrants were received at Castle Garden, a onetime fort and sometime concert hall that stood on an island—since connected to Manhattan by landfill—just off the Battery.

*The *i* or *y* suffix means “resident of.” Thus, a Pinsky is someone from Pinsk and a Minsky someone from Minsk. But there is even more in an Eastern European name than that. Immigrants from Russia proper considered themselves superior to those from Russian Poland. Therefore, it was better to have a name ending in *y*, indicating Russian, than *i*, indicating Polish. Similarly, a name ending in *ov* (the Russian style) carried more prestige and cachet than an *off* (the Polish).

**Tageblatt* literally translates as “Daily Page.”

2

WHY THEY CAME

The routes the Eastern European Jews took to come to America were circuitous, difficult, and tricky. No two tales were exactly alike, though there was a common theme—escape. And all required a common element—bravery.

Shmuel Gelbfisz, for example, had been born in the Warsaw ghetto, probably in 1879. Later, he would give 1882 as the year of his birth, and since he arrived in New York with neither a passport nor any other documents, there was no way his claim could be gainsaid. His father had been a Man of the Book, and spent most of his hours endlessly studying the Talmud. But his mother was a moneylender and, as such, was a woman of some importance in the community, if not always a popular one when she knocked on the door to call in her loans. She was also unusual in that she could read and write, and earned additional money writing letters for her friends and neighbors to their relatives in the United States. But despite these advantages, her son was a restless boy who had grown impatient with his father's strict Orthodoxy. In 1896, when he was either fourteen or eleven, he decided to run away from home and head for the land of golden opportunity. He discreetly "borrowed" one of his father's suits, had a tailor friend cut it down to his size, and with a small amount of money he had saved, plus a few rubles—borrowed again—from his mother's cash box, he set out more or less on foot—begging a ride wherever he could—for the German border.

At the border, he paid the customary bribe to a guard who promised to spirit him across. The guard took his money, but then betrayed him, and threatened to send him back. Using the excuse that he needed to use the

toilet, Gelbfisz found himself in a bathroom with a high window overlooking the Oder River. He climbed to the window, flung himself out into the river, and swam across to Germany, where he made his way to Hamburg.* By the time he reached Hamburg, his money had run out. While wandering the streets wondering what to do next, he noticed a shop with a name on it that he thought he recognized. He spoke to the shopkeeper in Polish, and discovered that he had found a countryman. When young Gelbfisz explained his plight, the fellow Pole left his shop and scurried around the neighborhood collecting money for the refugee. Within a few hours, this kindly soul had collected enough money for Shmuel to book passage on a boat to England.

In London, penniless again, Gelbfisz spent three days and nights in Hyde Park, where his address was a bench just opposite the entrance to the old Carlton House, from which he watched the hotel's guests arriving and departing in their glittering finery through the great glass doors. On the fourth day, however, he was picked up by a charitable Jewish group, which, with some difficulty, managed to locate some distant Gelbfisz relatives who were living in the city of Birmingham. The Birmingham relatives were less than overjoyed to receive him, though they helped him find a job hauling coal. Finally, to be rid of him, they gave him sufficient carfare to get him to Liverpool. It was only about seventy-five miles away, but at least it was on the sea.

In Liverpool, Gelbfisz learned that steerage passage to Canada had just gone up from four pounds six shillings to five pounds. At the end of his rope, he finally took to the streets as a beggar until he had raised the fare. Then, after the steerage crossing, he was deposited in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and made his way to the United States border, entering illegally in 1896. This was also the year that Thomas A. Edison's "Marvelous Vitascope"—a forerunner of motion pictures—was first shown to a New York audience, though the coincidence would not be noted until long afterward.

Years later, whenever he traveled to London, he always made a point of putting up at the Carlton House. Though he could not play a note, a grand piano was always ordered placed in the suite. But the major requirement was that the suite overlook the park, so that he could look down on the particular park bench that had once been his home. By that time, of course,

Shmuel Gelbfisz had changed his name twice, and had become Samuel Goldwyn of Hollywood.

In some ways, to be sure, Shmuel Gelbfisz's emigration from Russian Poland was not typical. He set off for America of his own free will, out of a sense of dissatisfaction and restlessness. Others who left Eastern Europe at the same time did so out of desperation—to flee conditions that had become unbearable and to escape from lives that had become unlivable.

In the synagogues of the Pale of Settlement it had been customary, as part of the regular order of service, to include a special blessing for the good health and long life of the czar. This blessing was sincere enough, but the sentiments that accompanied it were less affectionate than fatalistic. One wished the czar good health and long life because at least one had a fair idea of the sort of terrors and confusions that *this* czar was capable of bringing down upon one's head. It was the *next* czar—this one's successor—who loomed as the dreadful question mark.

Life for the Jews of Russia had never been exactly easy. And one of the greatest hardships that had to be endured was the fact that, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, conditions had alternated violently back and forth between periods of relative tolerance and calm and periods of reaction and repression, depending upon who occupied the throne. In the mid-eighteenth century, with things in her country going well, Catherine II had started her rule as a relatively benign monarch. She had felt that Jewish merchants and bankers would be good for her economy, and had welcomed them into the trades and professions. For a while it seemed as though Jews might one day gain the status of ordinary Russian citizens. But then the empress had a change of heart, and a period of restrictive policy followed.

The reign of Nicholas I, between 1825 and 1855, had been particularly savage. Under Nicholas, more than six hundred specifically anti-Jewish edicts were written into law. These ranged from the mildly annoying—censorship of Jewish texts and newspapers, rules that restricted the curricula of Jewish schools—to the monstrous: expulsion from homes and villages, confiscation of property, and a decree that bound young boys between the ages of twelve and twenty-five to service in the Russian army for twenty-five years. These boys were marched on foot to training camps hundreds of

miles from their homes, often in Siberia, and many died along the route. Once in the camps, they were subject to Christianized training, and were forbidden to practice any Jewish ritual. Those who refused were beaten, tortured, or killed. The object of the “Iron Czar” was to remove all traces of Judaism from his czardom, to purify and Christianize it. Furthermore, he called what he was doing “assimilation” of the Jews. It was no wonder that the word had a sinister ring to the Russians when the German Jews talked of the importance of assimilation in America.

Tales of the lengths the young Russian-Jewish youths would go to in order to avoid the long military ordeal under Nicholas I—an ordeal that was tantamount to a death sentence—became legion. In Samuel Goldwyn’s Warsaw, two young brothers had faced each other with pistols. One shot his brother in the arm, to cripple him, and the other shot his brother in the leg. One boy poured acid over his legs. The burns never really healed, he never walked again, and he spent the rest of his life with the lower part of his body wrapped in bandages. But pistols and acid were luxuries, unaffordable in most Jewish households. And so a popular way to render oneself unfit for conscription into the Russian military was to chop off the index finger of one’s right hand—the trigger finger—with a kitchen cleaver. Many of the young men who arrived at Ellis Island had been self-maimed in that way.

During his reign of terror, Nicholas I was also successful at persuading Jews to turn against, and betray, their fellow Jews. In each community, at least one Jew was given special officer status—and, of course, pay—to function as a *khaper*, or “grabber.” The *khaper*’s job was to identify the Jewish boys to the military police, who then snatched them from their schoolyards, from the streets, and even from their houses.

No wonder the accession of Alexander II—whom Disraeli called “the kindest prince who ever ruled Russia”—came as a relief. Alexander permitted a few Jewish youths to enter Russian universities. Certain Jewish businessmen whom he found useful were permitted to travel in parts of Russia where they had previously been prohibited. Special Jewish taxes were eased somewhat, and Alexander reduced the compulsory conscription period for Jews to five years. In his army, too, it was possible for a Jew to rise to officer rank without becoming a *khaper*. Then, on March 1, 1881, Alexander II was assassinated by a band of revolutionaries. With his successor, Alexander III, came disaster.

The new czar's tyranny over the Jews became legalized under the May Laws of that year, which prohibited Jews from owning or renting land outside towns and cities, and discouraged them from living in villages. The increasing economic pressures triggered the "spontaneous" outbreaks of 1881, the massacre of Kishinev in 1903, and the massive and brutal pogroms that followed. In 1891, thousands of Jews were expelled without warning from Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and Kiev, and six years later, when the government seized and monopolized the liquor traffic, thousands of Jewish innkeepers and restaurateurs—not to mention malt, grain, and corn dealers—were thrown out of business.

The reason behind Alexander III's persecution of the Jews was the same as Nicholas I's: a fanatical resolve to create a homogeneously Christian country, which meant the eradication of Judaism as a religious entity. As one of Nicholas I's edicts had explained, "The purpose in educating Jews is to bring about their gradual merging with the Christian nationalities and to uproot those superstitions and harmful prejudices which are instilled by the teachings of the Talmud." For "uproot," the czar might have substituted "kill." It was certainly an uprooting process more furious and brutal than anything that had been attempted since the Inquisition, four hundred years earlier, and it would not be surpassed until the Hitler era.

But another, more palpable reason—though it was never as clearly spelled out—behind the pogroms, both the official and the "spontaneous" ones, was the desperate, and largely unsuccessful, attempts by Jewish workers to organize trade and labor unions. In 1897, the General League of Jewish Workers in Russia, Poland, and Lithuania—Der Allgemeiner Jiddisher Arbeiter Bund—was organized, and over the next three years, led several hundred strikes of cobblers, tailors, brush makers, quilters, locksmiths, and weavers, who had been working eighteen hours a day for a wage of two to three rubles a week. Many of these strikes were marked by violence, bloodshed, and arrests. In the first years of the twentieth century, thousands of persons were arrested for political reasons, most of them Jews. In 1904, of thirty thousand organized Jewish workers, nearly a sixth were thrown into prisons or exiled to Siberia. The Pale of Settlement had become a hotbed of secret revolutionary activity. Then the revolution of 1905, a failure, seemed to erase all hope. It appeared that the only solution was to escape to America, the land of the free.

Needless to say, emigration was a painful step to take in itself, and an enormous gamble. But the decades of persecution had had at least one positive effect—a Darwinian principle had been proved, and only the hardest and toughest had survived. Years of common martyrdom had instilled common strengths. Proud and cynical, those Jews who had made it through the pogroms had begun to see themselves as a kind of aristocracy of endurers, and had even developed a certain hard-boiled sense of humor about their situation. If one can turn terror into a joking matter, there is strength in that. And there was certainly a touch of grim amusement in Russia as the downtrodden continued to offer up blessings for the czar's long life.

But pride and humor were put to the test with emigration. Emigration was an admission of failure. It meant an inability to endure any longer. As a result, some of the older rabbis stubbornly counseled their congregations not to emigrate—that emigration meant that the Jewish backbone had finally been broken, that a noble cause was being given up, the white flag raised. Thus, many Jewish families left their homes filled with a sense of shame, believing that the act of leaving marked them as cowards. Thus, many of the arrivals in the New World stepped off the boats in a thoroughly complicated and confused state of mind, not knowing whether they were spineless fools or heroes.

At the same time, the Jewish immigrant had often left behind him a seriously divided family. If, for example, a young man finally made up his mind to leave for America, he usually had the support of his mother, who saw nothing but hopelessness for her son's future in Russia. His father, on the other hand, was often opposed. The Jewish father, who in many cases was the Talmudic scholar and spiritual head of the household, had heard tales of young Jews' losing their faith in profligate America, and also argued that a son's duty was to remain at home to help support his family. Often the domestic bitterness that the young immigrant left behind him never healed, which only added to his guilt at having abandoned his homeland.

But abandon it they did, by the hundreds of thousands.

In the forlorn little Jewish settlement of Uzlian, deep in the province of Minsk—where to live in a house with a wooden floor instead of one of dirt was a sign of enormous affluence—a child was born on February 27, 1891.

Only years later would he reveal one of his most vivid childhood memories. Beginning in 1881, with the ascension of the despotic Alexander III, Jews of the region had been fleeing in increasing numbers every year, and he could recall standing with his mother at the Minsk railway station with throngs of Jews, waiting for the train that would take them to the port city of Libau. Nearby a political demonstration of some kind was taking place. Suddenly a company of cossack soldiers came charging down on horseback, and commands were barked out ordering the crowd to disperse. Whether the soldiers were acting on orders from above or merely on a whim there was no way of knowing. No one moved. Then the mounted soldiers tore into the crowd, wielding long whips, trampling screaming mothers and children under their horses' hooves, while the terrified little boy clung to his mother's skirts.

When he and his family finally made it to New York, via Canada, in 1900, he was nine years old. His name was David Sarnoff, the future founder and board chairman of the Radio Corporation of America. Other Russian Jews would have memories similar to Sarnoff's. Some would try to erase them from their minds, and never speak of them. Others would cling to their memories obsessively, and repeat the stories to their children and grandchildren, reminding them that such things could, and did, happen.

There were two ways to leave Russia: legally and illegally. Both courses were fraught with problems and frustrations, and they were equally expensive. To leave legally required costly visas, exit permits, and other bureaucratic travel documents, which often took months—even years—to acquire. Minsk was a popular gathering point for refugees waiting for permission to cross over into Poland, and another was Odessa, on the Black Sea. Sometimes families were delayed for so long in these cities while they waited for their necessary documents that children were conceived and born in the process, thus requiring additional permits and papers for the new babies. Today, many Russian-Jewish families who identify themselves as “from Minsk,” or “from Odessa,” actually represent families who had traveled long distances from tiny villages in the interior of the country. An illegal exit attempt was, obviously, riskier, but if successful it could also be much quicker. But one had to be prepared to bribe police, soldiers, and border guards at every step of the way.

In general, there were four principal routes out of Russia. Jews from southern Russia and the Ukraine usually tried to cross the Austro-Hungarian border illegally, and then make their way to Vienna or Berlin, and from there northward to German or Dutch port cities. From western and northwestern Russia and Poland, another illegal crossing was required into Germany—the route Shmuel Gelbfisz had chosen—where the immigrants regrouped and made their way northward to the sea. From the Austro-Hungarian Empire it was somewhat easier, and Jews were able to make a legal crossing into Germany, and on to Berlin and the north. From Rumania, the preferred route was through Vienna, Frankfurt, and Amsterdam.

Though a few who could afford to do so traveled some of these distances by train, most covered the long miles on foot, and these treks often involved swimming across border rivers, and inevitably involved dealing with members of patrols who profited handsomely from the refugees' plight. For weeks before departure, young Jewish men and women not only saved their money but also practiced walking long distances to toughen their bodies for the ordeal ahead.

Once in the European port cities, more confusion awaited them. Long lines of people waited for days at dockside to board loading ships, only to be told in the end that no space was available. In Bremen, Hamburg, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam thousands of people slept huddled in doorways, on the streets, and in parks, railway stations, and public toilets. By day, most of those waiting tried to find odd jobs, and a few—but surprisingly few—resorted to begging. Daily, the signals kept changing. One Jewish group, which had made it from Amsterdam to London, was told by an immigration official that “the committee” would help them. But when they arrived at the address of the committee, they were told that the committee had gone out of existence. There were always bureaucratic delays to contend with. One young man, emigrating from Lithuania in 1882 when in his mid-thirties, was named Harris Rubin. He told this story: After weeks of waiting in various lines, he had finally obtained that precious piece of paper: a steerage ticket for passage on a waiting boat. But when he arrived at the dock and presented his documents to the passenger agent, he was curtly told that, because he was traveling alone, and had left his wife and children behind him, he could not board. Only those traveling as families were being accepted. A few days later, however, seeing that the boat had

not yet departed, Rubin decided to try again. Apprehensively, he saw that he was going to have to confront the same passenger agent. But this time the agent merely waved him aboard.

Then there were the rigors of the steerage crossing, which cost between twenty and twenty-four dollars, depending on the cupidity of the ship's owner, and which lasted from four to six weeks, depending on the weather. The men and the women were separated by sex into two large holdlike rooms, stacked with bunks, below the water line. The bunks were narrow and short, arranged in tiers about two feet apart, and made of wood. There were no mattresses, blankets, or, needless to say, sheets. One's sack of belongings became one's pillow, and since belongings consisted of pots and pans and perhaps an extra pair of shoes, it was usually a lumpy one. One toilet served as many as five hundred people, and whether, or how often, one was allowed above decks for air depended on the arbitrary policy of the ship's officers.

Aboard ship, since most of the steerage passengers had never experienced ocean travel, seasickness was epidemic and sanitation was largely left in the hands of the passengers. As a rule, however, food was plentiful—no captain was eager to have reports of deaths at sea appear on his manifest—though not very appetizing. A typical daily menu consisted of bread, butter, salted herring, cake, and potatoes in their skins. But even those who felt well enough to eat were reluctant to touch the food, which they had been assured was kosher, but which they suspected—with good reason—was not.

It was no wonder that the Jewish immigrants arriving at Ellis Island looked spent and wasted. They had been sustained on the crossing mostly by hope. And yet, before they could debark, the master of a ship routinely required each immigrant to sign a document testifying that he had been well fed, well treated, well cared for medically, and was in excellent health. To their credit, these documents helped many sickly immigrants pass through the United States Immigration Department's health inspections.

Then there was the first view of America: the turreted, mosque-like towers of the main immigration building at Ellis Island, rising out of the waters of the harbor like a fairy-tale castle surmounted with quaint domes and finials. Though the interior of this building was starkly institutional—cavernous processing rooms, where immigrants were shunted through a

maze of corral-like iron fences from one set of inspections to another, meals served at long trestle tables with wooden benches in whitewashed mess halls—it must have seemed like paradise in comparison with steerage. In the vast, barrackslike dormitories filled with row after row of double-decker beds, there were at least clean white sheets, blankets, and fat down-filled pillows.

Processing at Ellis Island could take several days. Most dreaded were the eye examinations for trachoma, a contagious form of conjunctivitis, which the *New York Times*, in rather an alarmist style, described as “a sweeping plague—especially on the east sides of our cities—of European importation [that] would surprise no medical man familiar with foreign conditions and in touch with the swollen tide of immigration flowing towards us from sources beyond the jurisdiction of modern sanitation.” Anyone suspected of suffering from what the *Times* called this “insidious and disabling eye disease” was sent back to Europe on the next boat. In 1904, twenty thousand immigrants were rejected because of trachoma.

Finally, there was the culture shock upon arrival in the city itself. Each immigrant’s experience was different, of course, but there were a few common themes. A number complained, for example, of rude stares and jeers—particularly from children and teenagers. But most immigrants found that, compared with what they had endured, they were treated surprisingly well, though there were some aspects of America for which they were unprepared. Here, for example, are some of the impressions of one Isaac Don Levine. Later a successful journalist, Levine was born in Byelorussia in 1892, and came to the United States as a youth of nineteen.

He was astonished, for one thing, by the “skyscrapers,” and craned his neck backward to count up to sixteen floors of one building before being overcome by dizziness. Levine also marveled at the letter boxes, the mechanics of which he had a bit of trouble figuring out, and at the frequency of mail collections and the speed of delivery. In Kiev, he noted, a letter might travel for twenty-five years before reaching its destination. At first, he was startled by the sight of policemen carrying clubs instead of wearing sabers, and their habit of swinging their clubs as they walked about he at first found frightening. Later, he decided that this was just a mannerism, and not a threatening gesture. He noted that American policemen tended to be very tall.

Young Levine also observed that America appeared to be “the land of companies,” and that even a poor shoemaker whose shop was one basement room had hung out a shingle proclaiming himself to be the “Brockton Shoe Repairing Company.” There were other surprises. Back home in Russia, a number of foreign currencies had circulated interchangeably. But when Levine tried to pay his streetcar fare with a ten-kopeck coin, it was refused. He was also astonished to find, when he produced the correct fare in American money, that he was not given a ticket. Instead, the conductor simply pulled a chain and rang a little bell. Furthermore, the conductor made no attempt to cheat or overcharge him—did not even try to extract a bribe—as had been commonplace back home. He was struck by the speed and efficiency of the American railroads. A trip from Boston to Kansas City, he learned, took only forty-eight hours, and involved only one change, in Chicago. At home, to cover a similar distance between Vilnius and Orenburg took six days, and involved changing trains no fewer than eight times. On the trains and streetcars, he admired the “two rows of leather straps hanging on both sides of the car for the convenience of the standing public,” and added, “I cannot understand why they should not have at home the same useful device.”

Levine found the prices of clothes—“American clothes lack grace and elegance, but provide comfort”—low by comparison with those at home, and the rent “not as high as it sounds at first.”

He noted that most American schools were taught by women, not men—“old maids with kind hearts, but not pretty looks”—and when he finally screwed up sufficient courage to try to enroll in a public high school in order to improve his English, he was surprised to find that the principal who interviewed him was a man dressed in an ordinary business suit, not an officer in a military uniform. Perhaps Levine’s most astonishing discovery of all was the American public library system. Here he found that after filling out a simple form he was given two cards—one for fiction, one for nonfiction—good for four years. With these, he could remove as many books as he wished “without a penny’s expense on my part,” and was left wondering “how it is possible that no money deposit should be made.” He saw that there were no policemen patrolling the stacks of books, that “no suspicious eye follows you,” and that some library patrons were so relaxed in their surroundings that they actually slept in their chairs. On the other

hand, he was disappointed to discover that the young woman who issued his library card appeared to be illiterate. She had asked him how he spelled his name. "In our country, I said, a girl who could not spell would not command such a position." Levine asked his friend Hyman about this, and Hyman confirmed that many highly placed Americans could not spell. The doctor whom Hyman had consulted about his wife's rheumatism had also asked him to spell his name. "Just think of it," wrote Levine in a letter home: "the doctor, a university man, and cannot spell."

There were new curiosities daily. Like most Russian immigrants, Isaac Levine had never seen a Negro. But here, he wrote, "You meet colored people everywhere, and they seem to be more numerous than the whites. Most of them are very poor and ignorant." He also noticed an odd practice among American males involving their legs. When sitting down, in a streetcar, or at a restaurant table, men hitched up their trousers at the knee, exposing much more ankle and calf than would have been acceptable at home. Men also seemed to think nothing of pulling up their trousers, sitting back in their chairs, and tossing their feet up on tabletops or windowsills—behavior for which they would have been arrested in Russia. For a long time Levine watched with fascination, through an open window, a man who was seated beyond it with his feet up on the sill. The upper portion of the man's body was obscured behind the newspaper he was reading, and as he read his body seemed to sway backward and forward. Later, Levine discovered the explanation for this extraordinary motion—an American invention called the rocking chair.

Levine was impressed with the fact that every American home, "except very old ones," had a bathroom, but other conveniences were more distracting. In Russia, for instance, he had been told that all American houses were lighted with electricity. But in New York he found that the poorer homes were still lighted by gas. Though he was shown how to light and extinguish the gaslight in his room, he had also heard that many American suicides were accomplished by taking gas. He was more than a little nervous, when he lowered his lamp, "over this dangerous [ether] flowing in a pipe not far from [my] bed."

Levine was also unprepared for the American gum-chewing habit. Sitting next to a young woman on a streetcar who was "making queer motions with the muscles of her mouth," he wondered "what kind of mouth disease she

possesses.” Learning that Americans chewed a chicle concoction for pleasure, he was nonplussed. He was equally put off by Americans’ use of tobacco: “On every step you meet a pipe sticking from the mouth of a venerable citizen, a common pipe, at the look of which decent people at home would be horrified.” Of American food, he was impressed by the eggs, which he discovered “are absolutely oval and if you possess that steadiness in your hand—they can be made to stand erect on either of its ends,” something that the small round eggs of Russia could not be made to do. As for American drinking habits, Levine was of two minds. He complained that “vodka, real, real strong vodka, for which the hearts of some of our country men here long so much ... is not to be found here.” On the other hand, while admitting that the “American drunkard is usually a peaceful dove,” he also found it “more disgusting to see it in a nicely dressed, civilized being than in a tattered, illiterate peasant,” and was appalled by the number of saloons—“some of the streets are literally covered with them”—and the fact that he had been told that American consumption of alcohol “beats Russia.” He added, “The people begin to realize the great harm caused by it and the prohibition movement is gaining ground.”

Obviously, Isaac Levine was a fairly resilient young man, who quickly learned to take the ways of the New World in his stride, and looked on the bright side of things. Passing an American schoolhouse, he would observe that it was “rather large, surrounded by a spacious, clean yard, but ugly looking.” It reminded him of “a jail at home or of a soldiers’ quarter-house.” But over it “the American flag was waving ... and my aesthetic feelings were fully satisfied looking at it. I think it is the most beautiful banner in the world.”

Still, an element of homesickness could not be ruled out. In an old photograph, taken by Lewis W. Hine around 1910 and showing a group of Jewish women and children working on piece goods in a Lower East Side tenement, there is an odd detail. Though the scene is one of hardship and even squalor, a photograph is shown hanging prominently on the wall of the shabby room. It is of Czar Nicholas II—the last of the czars—and his family.

In the single decade between 1900 and 1910, more than eight million immigrants poured into the United States, most of them from Eastern Europe, a heavy percentage of these Jewish. The record of 1,000,000 immigrants in a year was first broken in 1905, was broken again in 1906, and reached an all-time high in 1907 with 1,285,000. Not all of these people, of course, became rags-to-riches success stories. But an astonishing number of them did. By the early 1900s, a new aroma seemed to be wafting across the air of the Lower East Side—barely detectable, perhaps, from the outside, but there nonetheless—the heady, intoxicating smell of Prosperity.

Though certainly overcrowded, the entire Tenth Ward could no longer be viewed as a single, unmitigated slum. Already “better neighborhoods” had begun to carve themselves out of the confusion of narrow streets. The poorest street, with the worst overcrowding, the most people to a room, was probably Cherry Street. But, by contrast, just a few blocks away was East Broadway, a wider thoroughfare, which had become the Lower East Side’s best address. On East Broadway lived the rabbis, doctors, shopkeepers, and families who had secured white-collar jobs in the city’s bureaucracy. A 1905 census revealed that one out of every three families living in the apartments on East Broadway employed at least one servant.

In 1903, the *Jewish Daily Forward*, which always closely scrutinized these trends, reported that a new word had entered the Yiddish language: *oyesen*, or “eating out.” To dine out—not at a friend’s or relative’s house, but at an actual *restaurant*—had been unheard of in the old country (and up until that point, even in the new), but the *Forward* noted that this stylish habit was “spreading every day, especially in New York.” And, a little later, the newspaper commented that vacations in the country “have become a trend, a proof of status.”

The *Forward* had begun carrying advertisements for resort hotels in the Catskills as early as 1902, when at least three such establishments offered their services, stressing kosher meals and farm-fresh eggs and vegetables. Their greatest attraction, of course, was clean mountain air and escape from the muggy heat of New York summers. In the beginning, these “resorts” were primitive affairs—hastily and cheaply converted farmhouses that had been divided up into tiny, cell-like rooms, or barns that had been filled with beds for dormitory-style living. For four or five dollars a week, children half-price, they seemed a bargain. But it wasn’t long before hotels in the

Catskills began offering more amenities—electric light, hot and cold running water, telephones, billiard tables, bowling alleys, and even nightly entertainment. And in less than two decades’ time the great Jewish resort palaces—Grossinger’s, the Concord—would make their appearance, upon which the whole idea of Miami Beach would soon be modeled. The mocking phrase “Borscht Belt” would be born, and Jewish comedians and performers—trying their wings for Broadway and the movies—would make wicked fun of their new-rich audiences’ fancy airs and pretensions, to their audiences’ great and unblemished delight.

Meanwhile, on the Lower East Side, another trend was noted by the ever-watchful *Forward*. Suddenly, it seemed, everybody on the East Side had to own a newfangled contraption called a Victrola, and the *Forward* complained vociferously about the noise created by them. In 1904, the paper editorialized:

God sent us the Victrola, and you can’t get away from it, unless you run to the park. As if we didn’t have enough problems with cockroaches and children practicing the piano next door.... It’s everywhere, this Victrola: in the tenements, the restaurants, the ice-cream parlors, the candy stores. You lock your door at night and are safe from burglars, but not from the Victrola.

Pianos? By 1904, owning a piano was yet another symbol of Jewish status. According to the *Forward*:

There are pianos in thousands of homes, but it is hard to get a teacher. They hire a woman for Moshele or Fennele and after two years decide they need a “bigger” teacher. But the “bigger” teacher, listening to the child, finds it knows nothing. All the money—down the drain. Why this waste? Because Jews like to think they are experts on everything.

Granted, the *Daily Forward* tended to exaggerate cases (*thousands* of pianos?) and, in its generally cranky tone, liked to scold its Jewish readers for not doing exactly as the *Forward* thought best. An opinionated paper, it

preferred to see immigrant Jewish noses pressed firmly to the grindstone, and Jewish money not frittered away on such frivolous frills and luxuries as meals in restaurants, holidays in the mountains, phonographs, pianos, and piano lessons for the children. (No matter that the pianos were usually bought “on time” from secondhand dealers, or taken over from previous tenants who couldn’t afford to move them.) Still, it was clear that the immigrants had money to spend, or waste, depending upon how one looked at it, and were determined to spend it exactly as they wished.

Some immigrant Jews were doing even more extraordinary things. Some were even marrying Christians.

*Later, he would boast that he had managed to swim the Oder even though he had never learned to swim.

3

A JEWISH CINDERELLA

Of course not all the Jews who escaped from czarist Russia made straight for the Lower East Side. Some, having made it as far as England, settled there, and an Eastern European enclave developed in the Whitechapel section of southeast London. Others, having crossed the Atlantic in English vessels to Canadian ports, settled there, in such cities as Montreal and Toronto, both of which now have large Jewish populations. Others, having cleared Immigration at Ellis Island, quickly made their way to join family or *landsleit*—countrymen—who had settled in the American Midwest or Southwest. Rose Pastor's family had settled in Cleveland, where no one would have suspected that she would create a national news sensation in 1905 in faraway New York.

The spring of that year had not been a particularly momentous or exciting one. Aside from the record-breaking immigration figures, no great events were shaking the earth, no burning issues consumed the public consciousness midway through the peaceful first decade of the twentieth century, which had been named the "Century of Progress." The popular and colorful Teddy Roosevelt was comfortably into his second term at the White House, having been reelected the year before by an unprecedented majority. That year, through Roosevelt's initiative, delegates from the empires of Russia and Japan had met at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and agreed upon terms for peace that would end the Russo-Japanese War, and for this achievement, Roosevelt would later receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

The battle lines, meanwhile, were being drawn between Americans who insisted that they would never forsake their horse-drawn landaus and victorias and those who were taking to the highways in the noisy new

motorcars with their internal-combustion engines. Obsolete carriage horses were being turned loose—into the streets of cities like New York, where they quickly died, creating a certain sanitation problem—in favor of Packards, Reos, and Wintons, while stables were being converted into garages, and coachmen into chauffeurs.

In the world of fashion, huge wide-brimmed hats surmounted with arrangements of silk flowers, artificial fruits and vegetables, even stuffed birds, were coming into vogue, and with them came the flaring gored skirts that swept the street on all sides. The artist Charles Dana Gibson had portrayed a number of tiny-waisted, fresh-faced girls wearing bosomy pleated and ruffled shirtwaists, and the shirtwaist would dominate fashion for nearly a generation as part of the Gibson Girl look. In Manhattan's garment district, the shirtwaist business was booming, and the Jewish girls who worked in these factories were known as "shirtwaist girls." The term "sweatshop" was not yet in common use, and would not be until the tragedy of the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in 1911, in which 146 people, most of them shirtwaist girls, lost their lives.

Then, in the middle of what had been an uneventful spring, the American reading public was treated to banner headlines detailing what was billed as a real-life "Cinderella story."

It all began on April 5, 1905, when the staid and stately *New York Times*—which never put engagement announcements on its front page except in the case of European royalty or international celebrities—broke its long-standing precedent. Obviously, the *Times* felt that the news of this particular betrothal was of unusual significance. Its front-page headline read:

J. G. PHELPS STOKES
TO WED YOUNG JEWESS

*Engagement of Member of Old
New York Family Announced*

BOTH WORKED ON EAST SIDE

An entire new century, after all, was now under way, a century that seemed filled with golden promise and limitless possibilities, in which

anything could happen, and in which the newsboy heroes of Horatio Alger's tales—"Tattered Tom" and "Ragged Dick"—were regarded as inspirational. Fairy tales, it seemed, could indeed come true, and the story certainly seemed to contain all the necessary elements of a fairy tale.

The backgrounds of the engaged pair, the *Times* pointed out, could not possibly have been more dissimilar. The young Jewess in question—and in its choice of phraseology, even from the Jewish-owned *Times*, there was a hint of condescension—was not even a member of one of New York's proud uptown Jewish families (such as the Ochses and Sulzbergers). She was, of all things, a Polish immigrant, and poor.

This Cinderella's name was Rose Harriet Pastor, and she was on many counts an extraordinary young woman. At the time of her engagement to Mr. Stokes she was twenty-five years old—not technically beautiful, but slender and petite with delicate features including a thin, patrician nose, pale skin, green eyes, and an impressive mane of Titian hair that she wore, in the Gibson Girl fashion of the day, pulled back at the nape of her neck in a loose chignon. She had been born in a tiny village called Augustów, near Suwalki, on what is now the Russian-Polish border, in the Jewish Pale of Settlement, the daughter of Jacob and Anna Weislander. When Rose was still an infant, her father died and her mother remarried, and Rose took her stepfather's surname of Pastor. As thousands of Jewish families were doing to escape the pogroms, the Pastors emigrated from Poland in 1881, when Rose was two, and settled in London's Whitechapel. Here, in the East End ghetto, the little girl helped her mother sew bows on ladies' slippers for the next ten years. But, when the time came, she was also sent to school, which would give her a distinct advantage when the family was able to afford its next move, in 1891, to America. By that time, English had become Rose Pastor's first language, and she spoke it with a pleasant British accent.

Once in the United States, the family traveled to Cleveland, where they had distant relatives. Soon afterward, Rose's stepfather died, and this, as it would turn out, would also be indirectly to her advantage. Though it forced her, at age twelve, to go to work to help support her mother and the younger children, it also made her her family's mainstay, and made her grow up quickly. For the next twelve years she worked fourteen hours a day in a Cleveland cigar factory, in a production line, rolling wrappers around cigars.

Since cigars are rolled when wet, it was damp, messy, and unpleasant work. And it was also monotonous. To relieve the monotony, she read. She discovered that she could sit at her worktable, rolling cigars with one hand, with a book in her lap, turning the pages with the other. Whenever her supervisor moved along the line, inspecting the girls' work, Rose would tuck the book under her apron.

She read constantly, avidly, whatever she could get her hands on. Had her Orthodox stepfather lived, this sort of behavior would never have been condoned. Bookishness was considered dangerous for Jewish girls, who, in any spare time they had, were supposed to study the womanly arts of housekeeping for future Jewish husbands. But Rose spent all her spare time reading. Indeed, the fact that she had not married by the age of twenty-five indicated that she had become something of a bluestocking.

She had also begun to write poetry. Her verse was light and airy and simple, much influenced by Emily Dickinson. In one poem, called "My Prayer," she wrote:

*Some pray to marry the man they love,
My prayer will somewhat vary:
I humbly pray to Heaven above
That I love the man I marry.*

While the sentiments in Rose Pastor's verses did not bear much heavy analysis, they were unquestionably pleasant ones, and she began to submit her poetry to the *Tageblatt*. After a few initial rejection slips, the paper began to buy and publish her verse. Then, in 1903, the *Tageblatt* invited Rose to come to New York to write an advice-to-the-lovelorn column on its English-language page, offering her a salary of fifteen dollars a week. This was a princely sum in an era when an Irish chambermaid might, if she were lucky, earn that much in a month, and when a copy of the *Tageblatt* itself sold for one cent. It was much more than Rose was making rolling cigars, and much more interesting work. Rose Pastor accepted the job eagerly, and her family followed their breadwinner to the East Coast, where she, her mother, and brothers and sisters took a small flat on Wendover Avenue in the Bronx.

Interestingly, in view of Rose Pastor's later career, the *Tageblatt* was the more politically conservative of New York's two leading Jewish dailies. Its rival, the *Forward*, was often fiercely and outspokenly socialist and trade unionist, which, as we shall see, Rose Pastor herself would one day become. But the *Tageblatt* took the stance that socialism was "ungodly," and often tried to convince its readers that Jewish labor organizers like David Dubinsky and Sidney Hillman were actually Christian missionaries in disguise. The *Tageblatt* also devoted much space to the uptown do-gooder activities of Jacob Schiff and Julia Richman. Naturally, the *Tageblatt* received more approval and support from the uptown capitalists than the *Forward* did.

Meanwhile, there was nothing at all political about Rose Pastor's early *Tageblatt* columns. Under the title "Ethics of the Dust Pan," they were not so much advice to the lovelorn as collections of sentimental homilies:

Life is a riddle to which love is the answer.

You suffer today because you have sinned yesterday.

A broken heart is better than a whole one where love has never crept in.

Who is too anxious to please pleases not at all.

Or little jokes and plays on words:

Good men become better by traveling, bad men, worse.

When a man is in a pickle, even his sweetheart *jars* him.

In addition to her regular column, Rose was occasionally assigned to do an interview or a feature story, for which she was given even larger by-lines. For one of these she was asked to investigate the phenomenon of the handsome young aristocrat named James Graham Phelps Stokes, who was doing volunteer social work for the University Settlement House on the Lower East Side. She was also asked to find out if there was any truth to rumors that, as a result of a disagreement with the board of governors, Mr. Stokes was about to withdraw his support from the University Settlement and move on to a new post.

From Stokes, Rose Pastor obtained a denial of the rumors, which the *Tageblatt*—with a certain penchant for making up stories out of whole cloth—had actually started. But it was also clear, from her story when it appeared, that she had been very much taken with Mr. Stokes personally. Breathlessly, and even a bit incoherently, she wrote:

Mr. Stokes is a deep, strong thinker. His youthful face “takes” by virtue of its fresh, earnest, and kind expression. One glance at his face and you feel that Mr. Stokes loves humanity for its own sake, and as he speaks on with the sincerity which is the keynote of his character you feel how the whole soul and heart of the man is filled with “Weltschmerz.” You feel that he “has sown his black young curls with bleaching cares of half a million men.”

Mr. Stokes is very tall, and, I believe, six feet of thorough democracy. A thoroughbred gentleman, a scholar, and a son of a millionaire, he is a man of the common people, even as Lincoln was. He is a plain man, and makes one feel perfectly at ease with him, nor does he possess that one great fault that men of his kind generally possess—the pride of humility. He does not flaunt his democracy in one’s face, but when his democracy is mentioned to him, he appears as glad as a child who is told by an appreciative parent, “You have been a good boy to-day.”

There was a great deal more in this vein, and later Rose Pastor would blame careless cutting and editing for the odd syntax and incomplete sentences, but even after deep cutting it was a two-column story, and, reading it, her editor could not resist saying to her teasingly, “If I thought as much of Mr. Stokes as you seem to do, I would take care not to let anybody know it.”

She had, however, already let Graham Stokes know it. He had asked to see her copy before it was printed, and she had submitted the story to him for his approval. Clearly, he not only approved of it but was also more than a touch flattered by it. The story, and its author, made such an impression on him that, instead of returning her pages to her in the mail, he personally carried them back to her by hand. Then he invited her to dinner.

Later, Rose Pastor would confess that it was a case of “love at first sight.”

The object of her affections, meanwhile, possessed all the qualities of a Prince Charming. James Graham Phelps Stokes, who was known to his friends as Graham, was thirty-one, Yale '92, over six feet tall, darkly handsome, with the profile and athletic build of a Greek god. He sailed, he rode horses, and at college he had been a track and tennis star. For years he had been regarded as one of New York's most eligible bachelors. He belonged to all the city's most exclusive clubs, including the City Club, the Knickerbocker Club, the Riding Club, the University Club, the National Arts Club, the Century Association, and the Saint Anthony Society, which was Yale's most elite fraternity. He was High Church Episcopalian. He and his family were firmly ensconced in the New York *Social Register*, and had been since the inception of that publication. The family had had its portraits painted by John Singer Sargent.

Though the *Times* and other newspapers, reporting the singular engagement, persisted in calling Graham Stokes a “millionaire,” young Stokes himself modestly denied this. On the other hand, there was no question that his father was. Graham was one of nine children of the banker Anson Phelps Stokes, and the Stokes family mansion at 229 Madison Avenue on the crest of Murray Hill, the city's most fashionable address, was one of New York's great showplaces. For a country place, Anson Phelps Stokes had built Shadowbrook, in Lenox, Massachusetts, a hundred-room turreted granite castle that occupied an entire mountaintop and was second in size only to the Vanderbilts' Breakers at Newport among America's great resort “cottages.” Once, when he was a student at Yale, one of Graham Stokes's brothers had wired to their mother at Shadow-brook, ARRIVING THIS EVENING WITH CROWD OF NINETY-SIX MEN. Mrs. Stokes had wired back, MANY GUESTS ALREADY HERE. HAVE ONLY ROOM FOR FIFTY.

And young Graham Stokes himself could hardly have been poor. He was president of the State Bank of Nevada, and he also owned a railroad, albeit a small one, the Nevada Central, with rolling stock consisting of only three locomotives and one passenger car.

Graham Stokes's lineage was as imposing as his family's wealth; he was “a descendant of families prominent in the Colonial history of New England,” as the newspapers put it, in a day when New England ancestors

mattered mightily to status-conscious New Yorkers. Both the Phelps and Stokes families had been early settlers in the Massachusetts colony, and when they were joined by marriage in the early nineteenth century, it became a family tradition to use both names in the surname, where the words “Phelps Stokes” were spoken with an audible, if not an actual, hyphen. In addition to James Graham Phelps Stokes, there were also Caroline M. Phelps Stokes, Ethel Phelps Stokes, Mildred Phelps Stokes, and Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes. The names had been further glorified through distinguished membership in the clergy. One of Graham Stokes’s younger brothers, the Reverend Anson Phelps Stokes, Jr., was secretary of Yale University, and pastor of New Haven’s most fashionable church, Saint Paul’s Episcopal. Finally, there were even connections with the British aristocracy. Through her marriage to an English viscount, Graham’s sister Sarah Phelps Stokes had become the Baroness Halkett.

This, then, was the dazzling young man who had asked the hand of a Polish immigrant ex-cigar roller in marriage.

The young bridegroom-to-be had already attracted a certain amount of attention in New York because of his choice of lifestyle. After graduating from Yale, he had earned a medical degree from Columbia University’s College of Physicians and Surgeons. But, rather than practice medicine, and while maintaining his banking and railroad interests along with his *Social Register* listing and uptown club memberships, he had chosen to move out of the family mansion and become a resident worker at the settlement house on Rivington Street. Other well-heeled uptowners, such as Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont and Miss Anne Morgan, had visited the Lower East Side to dispense largess. But young Stokes had chosen to work and *live* there. This was taken as an indication of his unusual dedication and sincerity—that his interest in the betterment of the poor was not that of a dilettante, even though he continued to keep a well-shod toe in the doorway of New York’s uptown society.

In the weeks that followed the *Times*’s astonished front-page announcement of the engagement, Rose Pastor and Graham Stokes were trailed by reporters and photographers from scores of American newspapers and magazines. The vast social, economic, and religious gulf that yawned

between the pair was the subject of much interest and comment. Their every move was chronicled, and every detail of their lives, past and present, that could be uncovered was reported on. The Cinderella aspect of the story was dwelt on at length, and soon the Stokes-Pastor romance was being treated as though it were the greatest love story of the new century. Avid readers were told what the couple wore, where they dined, what they ate. They were besieged with requests for interviews. One of the few granted by the heroine of the tale was to a reporter from *Harper's Bazaar* (or *Bazar*, as it was spelled then), which was then, as now, one of the bellwethers of fashion for the American upper crust.

“She might have been the model for Rosetti’s Beatrice,” wrote the *Bazar*, “or for the quiet and dreamy maidens in a Burne-Jones drawing.” Upon seeing her, the *Bazar* reporter wrote, “there grew into my consciousness, as one gains clear sight after darkness, the certainty of her essential womanliness; her eye was gentle, her movement graceful, her manner restful; she had poise, that inevitable accompaniment of character.” The *Bazar*, however, was not too awed to forget to remind its readers of the essential incongruity of the situation, and that “the groom [was] a Yale graduate, a clubman, a banker, a member of one of the oldest and most exclusive American families, heir to fortunes multiplied at will ... and the bride, an East Side Russian Jewess of humble origin, who has spent years in a cigar-factory. It was hard to imagine Hymen’s torch kindled at the altar of more dissimilar lives.”

The pair were asked all the most obvious questions. Hadn’t Mr. Stokes’s old and most exclusive parents disapproved of the match? Graham Stokes issued a manly statement to the *Times*: “I wish the *Times* would correct two serious errors in the published accounts of my engagement. The first is that there is serious opposition on the part of my family. That is entirely false. There is nothing but the utmost cordiality and delight. The second error is that there is a difference in religious belief between Miss Pastor and myself. She is a Jewess, as the Apostles were Jews—a Christian by faith.” As proof of family solidarity behind the union, Graham Stokes announced that his clergyman brother would perform the marriage ceremony in an Episcopal service.

Rose Pastor also adopted the Jews-and-Christians-are-the-same argument, saying that she believed Judaism to be an “inspired religion,” an

so did her fiancé. However, she added, both of them believed that, added to the tenets of Judaism, were “many additional truths” of Christianity. She pointed out that both Moses and Paul were Jews, and that Jesus “came not to destroy the law of the prophets but to fulfill.” After all, weren’t both the Old and New Testaments bound between the same hard covers? Both she and Mr. Stokes, she said, “accepted the teachings of Jesus unqualifiedly, regarding Him as a divine teacher and guide.” *Harper’s Bazar* also tried to sort out this tricky matter, saying, “The only difference between them is a matter of ancestry. Her ancestors were of the Jewish race, his were not. It is a question of race and not religion. [She] is a Christian woman, and has all the impulses, beliefs, strength, and sweetness which characterize the ideal Christian character.”

These theological rationalizations might satisfy *Harper’s Bazar* and its largely Christian readership, but they sat not at all well among members of the Old World Orthodox-Jewish community in which Miss Pastor had been raised, who greeted her statements with outrage and dismay. She could not, her Lower East Side countrymen insisted, have it both ways. A Jew was a Jew. A Christian was a Christian. And though the word *conversion* had been carefully avoided in describing Miss Pastor’s religious highwire balancing act, it was pointed out that Episcopalian marriages were not performed unless both parties had been baptized. In other words, Rose Pastor was converting to Christianity, and trying to hide the fact behind a smoke screen of obfuscation and Judeo-Christian double-talk.

Others pointed out that if there had been a good Jewish father in the picture, such goings-on would not have been tolerated. No one, meanwhile, had asked Rose Pastor’s mother how she felt about the matter. Perhaps this was because Anna Pastor’s limited English would have made her a difficult interviewee. Or perhaps the poor woman was too overwhelmed by what was happening to her family to think coherently about it. In any case, for a readership more titillated by the ways of the rich than those of the poor, the press was much more interested in what the Stokes family thought about the unusual alliance. But if any of them had misgivings, they kept very stiff upper-class upper lips and refused to show it.

Of Rose Pastor’s social zeal, the *New York Times* commented, “As she talks on the uplifting of the poor, her face lights up.” At the same time, one

of her friends—unidentified—was quoted describing her as “very interesting, very sincere, but somewhat of a dreamer.”

The Jewish press, however, remained cynical and unconvinced of her sincerity. The *Tageblatt*'s rival, the *Daily Forward*, was always looking for ways to embarrass the *Tageblatt* or one of its staff, and the *Forward* was quick to pick up one juicy bit. Not many months before the engagement was announced, the *Tageblatt* had run an editorial that had inveighed heavily against intermarriage between Christians and Jews. The editorial had taken to task Israel Zangwill, the British writer, for marrying a Christian woman. And who had been the author of that polemic? Why, none other than Miss Rose Pastor herself! But now, when it suited her, Miss Pastor endorsed interfaith marriages.

Miss Pastor, meanwhile, continued to insist that the couple's common interest in the poor overrode all their differences, and that the Stokes family's money had not been a consideration in her decision. Of her own self-education, she said, “It was a hard struggle. I read much, and I only read books that I thought would be useful to me, and then I began to write. My efforts to obtain an education were all due to a desire to be of service, not because I had any desire to rise above the station I then occupied in life.”

As the early summer progressed, the news and magazine stories about the romantic pair continued, and both complained that they could not leave their homes or offices without running a gauntlet of photographers and reporters. In response to repeated questions about what she and Mr. Stokes expected to accomplish on the Lower East Side, Rose replied, “If our life and our united deeds do not speak for us, I feel we should be silent.” What deeds, the *Daily Forward* wanted to know? Everyone knew that New York's Christian community wanted to Christianize the newly arrived Jewish immigrants. So, secretly, did the uptown Jewish merchant-banker class—those of Julia Richman's ilk—many of whom had already converted.

These stories of threatened conversions frightened the Lower East Side Jews. Down through the centuries had come horror stories, such as the account of how King Manuel of Portugal, in order to solve the Jewish “problem,” had all the Jewish children in his realm kidnapped on the first day of Passover in 1497, taken to churches, and forcibly baptized. Then, their parents were given the choice of baptism or exile. Conversion-scare

stories also sold papers, and the *Tageblatt* countered with a report of a Jewish man who had been accosted on a New York street by a Christian, and forced to eat oysters. The man became violently ill and died. Later, the *Tageblatt* admitted that the story was a fiction.

While all this was going on, a date for the “wedding of the century” was set. It would take place on July 18, 1905, the bride’s twenty-sixth birthday, at the Point, another summer home of the bridegroom’s parents, in Noroton, Connecticut, overlooking Long Island Sound. (The Stokeses, it seemed, spent July at the shore, and August in the mountains.) To minimize the publicity, only the immediate families and a few close friends were invited. Of course this attempt at privacy only whetted the press’s appetite, and on the day of the wedding there was more publicity than ever. Some reports had it that the bride looked radiant, others that she looked sad and worried and drawn. One said that Mrs. Anson Phelps Stokes, Sr., heaved a great, mournful sigh when her son uttered the words “I do.” But the fact was that the Point was so thoroughly cordoned off by police that none of the press was able to see either the bride or the groom, or witness any part of the ceremony. Nor would the family go so far as to reveal what the bride wore.

Two days later, Mr. and Mrs. James Graham Phelps Stokes boarded the White Star liner *Cedric* for a three months’ honeymoon in Europe. Though they had come aboard early, in order to avoid detection, they were recognized by a photographer as they strolled on the deck. The photographer’s head and shoulders were covered with a black cloth, and to foil him, Graham Stokes blocked his lens with a corner of his coat. Unable to see what was the matter with his camera, the photographer darted back and forth underneath his drapery. Finally, Stokes tapped the man on the shoulder, and politely asked him not to take any pictures.

The newlyweds did, however, grant a shipboard interview to a *New York Times* reporter in their stateroom. They would visit England, France, Switzerland, Hungary, and southern Italy, they announced. From Budapest, they would also journey northward to the little Polish *shtetl* where Rose Pastor Stokes had been born. Otherwise, said Mr. Stokes, “we have no definite plans. We avoided making any. Both of us are tired, and we are looking for a rest. When we reach London, and we are going there first, we will be met by my mother’s automobile and our first run will be through Scotland. All our travel will be by automobile. We have had too much

publicity. A great deal has been said about what my wife and I propose to do in uplifting the fallen. The fact that the people of the East Side are as self-respecting as we are seems to have been overlooked. What we want to do now is just to go away quietly and have a restful time.” (In its headline on the Stokes departure story, the *Times* commented somewhat tartly, “Not So Bent on Uplifting,” seemingly missing the point of Mr. Stokes’s statement.)

The *Times* reported that Mrs. Stokes wore a white shirtwaist, a gray walking skirt, and a wide-brimmed straw hat with a large black ostrich feather. Mr. Stokes wore a light suit, a “negligee shirt,” white canvas shoes, and a straw hat. It was also noted that the Stokes stateroom on the *Cedric*’s promenade deck was “comfortable but not overluxurious,” though certainly it was more luxurious than the steerage quarters in which the bride had first sailed to America.

There were one or two more ominous notes. The only people to arrive at the pier to see the Stokeses off were two young girls with whom Rose Stokes had worked. No members of either of their families had come to wish them bon voyage, and the curious absence of any flowers, candy, fruit baskets, wine, or other offerings that might have been expected in a honeymoon stateroom drew comment.

The newlyweds were well out to sea when the first blistering attack upon them appeared. On July 20, 1905, an editorial prepared by the *Hebrew Standard*, and headlined “The Climax of Apostacy” (*sic*), which the paper would publish the following day, was distributed in advance to other American newspapers. The article took it for granted that Rose Pastor’s Christian marriage implied the bride’s denunciation—as well as renunciation—of her inherited faith, and said, among other things:

The christological influence the young millionaire and his newly Christianized bride will exert over the children with whom they will come into contact will be distinctly harmful. They are Jewish children, and any teaching which will create a gulf between them and their parents must certainly be regarded with suspicion.

Notwithstanding the statement that all the work the gentleman in question will do on the east side will be of non-sectarian character, we find that he is a Director of the Federation of Churches, which is doing distinctly Christian work on the east side. Consequently we may safely presume that the work both he and his newly-made wife will be engaged in among Jewish children will be of a non-Jewish character, and to this we strenuously object.

That this Christian gentleman and Jewish girl should have married is their own business, that the lady should have adopted another religion is a matter for her own conscience, but the announcement that they are to work on the east side among the Jewish children is certainly the business of the community. We may say quite frankly and openly that they would have shown far better taste had the young couple quite frankly and openly said that they would leave the east side alone and continue their uplifting work among other sections of the population in greater need of it than the Jewish community.

Interestingly, the *Hebrew Standard* had also editorialized that the uptown German Jews were “closer to the Christian sentiment” around them, and had nothing in common with the “Orientalism” of the East Side’s “miserable darkened Hebrews.” Was the *Standard* addressing itself to a “white” Jewish readership? Or was this just another indication of the kind of Jewish schizophrenia that seemed to be sweeping the country? In any case, it was another dark omen that the Cinderella Story, and the Romance of the Century, might in the end turn out to be something else again.

“Fame!” Rose Pastor had written in one of her verses for the *Tageblatt*:

Fame!
What's in the name
To make men hurry and scurry so;
To make them hanker and worry so;
Rushing forever past friend and foe
Rushing so madly through maddening crowd,
Heedless of human hearts crying aloud;
Hearts that are hungry—and still theirs are proud!

*Passing the true for profitless gain;
Giving up all for the naught of a name—
For fame!*

But now, of course, Rose Pastor Stokes herself was famous, and her marriage—giving up her Jewishness for the naught of a name—had provided a whole generation of East Side Jewish girls with a romantic idyll of how, with a simple “I do,” it was possible to leap out of grinding poverty into success and luxury. Upon returning to New York from their summer-long honeymoon in Europe, Rose and Graham Phelps Stokes set themselves up in a top-floor apartment in a building on the corner of Grand and Norfolk streets on the Lower East Side, just nine blocks east of the Bowery. They had chosen this far from fashionable address, Rose explained to an interviewer from *Harper’s Bazar*, for a variety of reasons. For one thing, it was close to the University Settlement, where both planned to continue to work. For another, it was hard by the teeming Eastern European Jewish ghetto, and the poor whom they intended to uplift. To her interviewer, Rose dismissed the apartment as “tiny,” though it had a comfortable quota of six rooms—a library, a dining room, a sitting room, a large and well-equipped kitchen, and two bedrooms—and a bath. The building had an elevator, run by “a German woman in a blue calico gown.” Rose pointed out that the apartment rented for “only” thirty-eight dollars a month. But the interviewer noted that, though Rose Stokes described her decor as “simple,” there were “finely bound books” on the bookshelves of the library, a piano in the sitting room, “handsome vases” filled with fresh flowers on the tables, some bronze pieces, Oriental rugs on the floors, and Millet etchings on the walls. Mrs. Stokes explained that she had “literally” no servants, “the only help being the janitress, who is called in on sweeping-days.”

The Stokes apartment, and its location, also had a symbolic significance, Rose explained. With it, she hoped to demonstrate how, with a few simple touches, even the most cramped dwelling place in the ghetto could be made pleasant and attractive. Rose explained how, with little economies, it was possible to live on a modest budget. For example, she used very little meat, substituting “eggs cooked in innumerable ways.” She used lots of uncooked vegetables, plenty of milk, good bread and butter and fruit, but neither

coffee nor tea. Another economy was to eliminate table linen. Instead of napery—"quite an item in the household expenses"—she used "pretty Japanese napkins" of white paper, which could be bought at twenty cents the hundred, disposed of after each meal, and "which entirely eliminate laundry work." She went on to say that she hoped her apartment would have a second symbolic function: that it would "arouse public interest, and force more general recognition of the unfair condition of life and labor that weighs down our neighbors." This was why she was taking a reporter from *Harper's Bazar*, and a photographer, on a tour of the place.

But which was it to be? An example of how the poor could get by with substituting eggs for meat, using paper napkins instead of linen, milk instead of coffee or tea, and thus be able to afford Oriental rugs and fresh flowers? Or a demonstration of the fact that the rich lived better than the poor—a fact that few of the poor had not grasped? Rose Pastor Stokes seemed not to have realized that she could not have it both ways; that her elevator building, her janitress, her six rooms with private bath, her steam heat and electricity were amenities that would have seemed incomprehensible to the average tenement dweller down the street, where a family of five lived in a single windowless cell, a single fetid toilet served an entire building, the family bathtub was the kitchen sink where only cold water ran, and a fire escape in good weather provided the luxury of a second room. She seemed not to realize that, for a family bringing in only six or seven dollars a week, an apartment costing "only" thirty-eight dollars a month would have been out of the question. This appeared to be at the heart of Rose's problem. Now that she was indeed famous, she seemed not quite to know what to do with her fame.

As the year 1905 drew to a close, meanwhile, there was a certain amount of speculation within the upper reaches of New York society as to whether the new Mrs. James Graham Phelps Stokes would be listed in the next edition of the *Social Register*. Or whether, for having married a Jewess, Mr. Stokes would be dropped from the little list of who mattered in New York's white Anglo-Saxon, Protestant upper crust.

These questions were duly answered when the 1906 issue of the *Register* made its annual autumn appearance. Both newlyweds were listed, along with their prestigious clubs, at the unlikely address of 47 Norfolk Street, close to what was now their joint settlement-house work—though they also

indicated a more prepossessing summer address: a place called Caritas Island, off the Connecticut shore near Stamford. Thus, Rose Pastor earned another distinction of sorts. She had become the first person of known Jewish descent to be included in New York's official "stud book," unless one counted August Belmont, who "passed."

That Rose would have been included in the *Social Register* was interesting for several reasons. For one thing, she had obviously gone to the trouble of filling out the necessary little form, which asked listees to supply their "Christian name." For another, it indicated to some degree her endorsement of the values represented in America's first attempt to catalogue and codify its upper class (*Who's Who in America* would not appear until several years later), a class into which she had so recently and magically been elevated. Was there any ambivalence, any feeling of duplicity here? Apparently not, because for the next two decades Rose and Graham Stokes's names would appear in Capitalism's official gazetteer.

Many young Jews had left Russia with their souls afire with socialism, yearning for the day when the hated czars would be deposed and leadership would be assumed by the working classes. Many still carried with them their keys to *das alte Heim*—the old home—even though they had seen with their own eyes the old home put to the torch, and knew that the old village had been scorched from the face of the earth and erased from the map. Some even dreamed of going back to Russia someday, when a new order had finally been established.

But the ferocious pogrom of 1903 in the city of Kishinev, in southern Russia—in which forty-nine people were murdered and more than five hundred maimed and mutilated—had been a grim reminder that life in the old home continued to be a perilous game of Russian roulette. In the wake of Kishinev, there was also apprehension in New York that another great wave of emigration to America would be set off, further flooding the already crowded labor market—which was exactly what happened. American Jews were torn between compassion for their beleaguered countrymen and fears that their gains in the New World would be placed in new jeopardy. Finally, when the attempted Russian revolution of 1905 failed dismally, most Jewish immigrants resigned themselves to the idea

that America would be their home for the rest of their lives, and probably the rest of their children's lives as well. The question then became: could they work within the existing system, or did the system itself have to be changed?

There was evidence to show that the American system worked. The former tinker now had his own scrap-metal business. The itinerant cobbler now had his own shoe-repair shop with his name in gold letters on the door, and could afford a vacation in the Catskills. The tailor now had his own dressmaking business, and had bought his family a piano. Rose Pastor had, in the Jewish expression, "made all her money in one day," and was now listed in the ranks of New York's society ladies. But she didn't behave like one. She was one who claimed the system ought to be changed.

Not long after her return from her grand tour of Europe, Rose Pastor Stokes announced that she had become a socialist. Her mission, she revealed, would not be to Christianize East Side children. Instead, it would be to free the workers of the world from the shackles of "the bosses." From an improvised platform in Union Square, she spoke of the thousands of other immigrants who were still locked within the confines of the ghetto, who worked long hours at low wages, who did piecework at home by gaslight until they went blind, who offered up their young lives at the golden altar of capitalism, while their employers grew fat and rich. Rose Pastor, it seemed, had found a new calling, as a rabble-rouser.

By 1910, while still living like a capitalist on Norfolk Street, Rose had announced that *both* she and her husband were members of the Socialist party. In any strike or demonstration, Rose could be found marching, chanting, making fiery speeches. Though she and her husband often dined out in restaurants, she joined the Hotel and Restaurant Workers' strike, protesting low wages and poor working conditions. In one way or another, she kept herself in the public eye, choosing, for the most part, unpopular causes. In 1914, Margaret Higgins Sanger introduced the phrase "birth control," and had to flee to England to escape federal prosecution for publishing and mailing "Family Limitation," a brochure that dealt with contraception. Rose Stokes immediately took up the cause of birth control, and became one of the leaders of the American movement. With Helena Frank, she translated Morris Rosenfeld's "Songs of Labor" and other poems from the Yiddish. She turned her hand to pencil drawings, all of them

depicting the harsh injustices inflicted upon workers by the American capitalists. With a young Russian-Jewish playwright named Elmer Reizenstein (later Elmer Rice), she became involved in the Proletarian Theatre movement, and wrote a never-produced play, *The Woman Who Wouldn't*, about a charismatic female labor leader who campaigns tirelessly against the “bosses,” in which character she doubtless saw traces of herself. “For the future—not the distant future—belongs to us,” she wrote to her friend Eugene V. Debs, an unsuccessful Socialist candidate for President in 1912. It began to seem as though Rose Stokes’s chief claim to fame would be as a backer of lost, or losing, causes.

Still, the Jewish socialist movement was slow to get under way in the United States. For one thing, who had the energy left over for politics at the end of a working day? Where was the time to attend speeches and rallies, and mount demonstrations? What was the point in organizing strikes, when inexpensive thugs could be hired to break them up, and scab labor was so cheap? The answers to all these questions were negative, and adding to the gloomy outlook was a kind of traditional Jewish cynicism and pessimism: after all, for centuries—and not just in disenfranchised Russia—the Jews had been struggling for some kind of political recognition, but without success. Why should their chances be any better in America? True, there were hundreds of thousands of Jews in New York City, but they were still in the minority. Even if every Jew in the United States proclaimed himself a socialist tomorrow—a distinct unlikelihood—the Jewish socialists would still be enormously outweighed by the rest of the population. A *worldwide* socialist movement might prevail someday, but never a Jewish one.

Still, a few Jewish socialist leaders emerged during the early years of the century—Meyer London, Morris Hillquit. In 1900, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union had been organized under Joseph Barondess, and a few scattered strikes for higher wages and better working conditions had been staged in the Jewish-owned “needle trades,” but without much in the way of results. Workers—most of them women—in the garment industry still labored for three or four dollars a week, and strikes were quickly broken up by hired Irish, Italian—and some Jewish—thugs who charged the picket lines and frightened the women.

Then, in 1909, there began to be talk of a “general strike” in Local 25 of the ILGWU, which was the shirtwaist makers’ union. Thanks to Charles

Dana Gibson, it seemed as though every American woman wanted a whole wardrobe of shirtwaists, and by 1909 New York's production of shirtwaists had reached fifty million dollars annually. At the same time, the young women who pieced the goods together and fitted them with ruffles, bows, and trimmings were required to pay for their own needles, thread, and fabrics, while for every ten-dollar shirtwaist a seamstress turned out, she was paid two dollars. The girls had to rent the chairs they sat in, and had their pay docked if they were more than five minutes late to work. The general strike was an ambitious idea, considering the fact that when it was proposed, Local 25 could boast of only about a hundred members, and had a little less than four dollars in its treasury.

Still, a meeting to discuss the matter was called for November 22 at Cooper Union. Apparently the timing was right, for thousands turned out—not only the shirtwaist makers, but all sorts of rank and file from the men's and women's clothing, fur, hat, glove, shoe, and trimmings industries. Rose Pastor Stokes was there in her blazing coif of red hair, shouting, "Arise! Unite! Down with the bosses!" The labor leader Samuel Gompers was the keynote speaker, and he was followed by others. But as the evening wore on, and speaker followed speaker, a mood of torpor and lethargy began to pervade the audience. Jewish pessimism was setting in again; like so many other rallies, this one appeared to be coming to naught, and between rounds of halfhearted applause a few people began sneaking out to head home for the night. Then all at once a teenage girl named Clara Lemlich sprang to her feet and raced to the stage. Speaking in Yiddish, she cried out, "I am a working girl, one of those striking against intolerable conditions. I am tired of listening to speakers who talk in generalities. What we are here for is to decide whether or not to strike. I offer a resolution that a general strike be declared—now!" To a hushed audience, she swore, "If I turn traitor to the cause I now pledge, may this hand wither from the arm I now raise."

This spunky performance seemed to galvanize the audience. Suddenly it was on its feet, stamping, shouting, cheering, waving fists. Then it was out into the street with more shouting, cheering, hand-clapping, and singing of songs. The next morning, the strike was on.

Something about the idea of a major strike being led by a seventeen-year-old girl caught the fancy of all New Yorkers. Even Rose Stokes had been upstaged, and no work stoppage in the city had ever received so much

publicity. Well publicized, too, were the working conditions in the shirtwaist factories that girls were protesting. Most shops closed, and when scabs were sent in, workers from other unions joined the Jewish girls to help fight them off. Hundreds of strikers were arrested, but rich and social people from uptown—including the regulars, Alva Belmont and Anne Morgan—provided money for their bail. Checks poured in from all over the country to help the strikers, and the students of Wellesley College in Massachusetts sent a check for one thousand dollars to the strike fund. Week after week the strike went on, and every day there was a new report in the newspapers, usually dealing with the young girls' stamina and bravery in the face of their merciless employers. In the *New York Sun*, McAlister Coleman wrote:

The girls, headed by teen-age Clara Lemlich, described by union organizers as a “pint of trouble for the bosses,” began singing Italian and Russian working-class songs as they paced in twos in front of the factory door. Of a sudden, around the corner came a dozen tough-looking customers, for whom the union label “gorillas” seemed well-chosen.

“Stand fast, girls,” called Clara, and then the thugs rushed the line, knocking Clara to her knees, striking at the pickets, opening the way for a group of frightened scabs to slip through the broken line. Fancy ladies from the Allen Street red-light district climbed out of cabs to cheer on the gorillas. There was a confused melee of scratching, screaming girls and fist-swinging men and then a patrol wagon arrived. The thugs ran off as the cops pushed Clara and two other badly beaten girls into the wagon.

I followed the rest of the retreating pickets to the union hall, a few blocks away. There a relief station had been set up where one bottle of milk and a loaf of bread were given to strikers with small children in their families. There, for the first time in my comfortably sheltered, upper West Side life, I saw real hunger on the faces of my fellow Americans in the richest city in the world.

Official New York took a stand of pious disapproval of the shirtwaist-makers' strike, and denounced the act of striking itself as un-American, immoral, and even unholy. In sentencing a striker, one city magistrate declared, "You are on strike against God and Nature, whose firm law is that man shall earn his bread in the sweat of his brow." But public sympathy—and that of the press—prevailed. Bail costs for the strikers ran as high as twenty-five hundred dollars a day, but somehow they were met, and the strike continued until February of the following year—nearly three full months.

When it was finally settled, though, it was hard to tell whether there had been a victory or not. A number of improvements in working conditions were promised by the shirtwaist companies, but the strikers' principal demand—that the ILGWU be recognized—was denied. In the course of the strike, however, membership in the union had swelled from a hundred to more than ten thousand. From that point onward, the ILGWU would have to be reckoned with as a force in the garment trade.

Throughout the rest of 1910, and into the winter months of 1911, strike seemed to follow strike among the Jewish trade unions—not only those within the garment industry but also those of the bakers', printers', and painters' unions. On March 25, 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire provided the union movement with powerful new impetus.

If none of the strikes of this period had quite the impact and drama and appeal of the one led by Clara Lemlich, they had another unexpected side effect—a kind of collective search of the Jewish conscience. Many of the owners of the struck businesses were themselves Jewish, and were aware, painfully, that the long series of strikes was only furthering the Christian notion of Jewish contentiousness—that one reason why Jews had trouble assimilating into American life was that they could not even get along with one another. Owners of Jewish businesses were also increasingly sensitive to accusations of Jewish avarice and Jewish acquisitiveness—the "pound of flesh" syndrome—and to an impression that was being created that Jews exploited their own kind. Was this sort of thing, as they said, good for the Jews? Was this the way Jews wanted to present themselves to the rest of the community—as a breed of hagglers, backbiters, complainers, bullies? A Jewish labor writer, Will Herberg, tried to deflect this sort of criticism when he wrote in the *American Jewish Year Book* that Jewish employers and

employees shared a “common social and cultural background,” and within it “an age-old tradition of arbitration, of settling their often bitter disputes within the Jewish community.... They shared too, as a heritage of centuries of self-enclosed minority existence, a marked concern for the *reputation of the Jewish community with the outside world* [italics added].”

True enough. Still, feelings of Jewish guilt cannot be entirely credited for the fact that the multitude of Jewish-on-Jewish strikes were eventually settled, and that the settlements generally, little by little, left the workers better off. But ethnic guilt did make the settlements more painful and personal.

Rose Stokes, meanwhile, had become an increasingly vocal spokeswoman for the Jewish radical Left. She took eagerly to the lecture platform and traveled about the country expounding her doctrine of socialism, while her more publicity-shy husband stayed behind in New York with his work at the University Settlement. Now Rose would be in Chicago, now Pittsburgh, now Saint Louis, and wherever she went she created headlines. Her press, now, was almost always openly hostile, which provided Rose with another outlet for her bewildering energy—writing letters of clarification and denial to editors of newspapers, a practice that, as we shall see, would soon get her into deep trouble. If Rose had a fault it was that she was passionately sincere—well-meaning, theatrical, and usually in over her head.

Audiences in goodly numbers usually turned out to hear what Rose Stokes had to say. After all, by virtue of her marriage, the Jewish Cinderella had become something of a national celebrity, and many people were simply curious to have a look at her. But the trouble was that Rose had a slight credibility problem. It was hard to take her all that seriously. Here she was, after all, with a rich husband—a doctor to boot, who could practice medicine if he chose, but didn’t because he didn’t have to work—who owned a railroad, who’d provided her with an apartment in the city and a house in the country on Long Island Sound. And she was railing against intolerable working conditions and the venality of bosses. The feeling was: yes, there were problems, and yes, the problems were serious ones, but they

were hardly Rose's problems anymore. What was this privileged lady, this creature of capitalism, *kvetching* about?

One woman who was not impressed by Rose's oratory was Miss Julia Richman, who, when she referred to Rose at all, called her "That Woman," or "That Crazy Russian." After all, Rose was trying to stir up dissent against the very form of government that Julia Richman was trying to get her students to embrace. Still, by 1912, Miss Richman had begun to feel that much of her life's mission had been accomplished. The Great Pushcart Era of the Lower East Side was coming to an end, for one thing. Though this was the result of immigrants' moving steadily into the middle class, Miss Richman tended to believe that she deserved personal credit for this development. Feeling that hers was a job well done, she announced her retirement that year "to make room for a younger woman."

She was fifty-six years old, but foresaw many years of public service and general usefulness ahead of her in other fields. She planned, for example, to continue lecturing and writing articles. In 1908, her book *Good Citizenship*—a civics textbook designed for fourth-graders in an urban setting—had been published by the American Book Company. It dealt primarily with how city fire, police, and sanitation departments did their jobs, and its moral tone was high. She reiterated her familiar themes. On the importance of keeping fire escapes clear, she wrote: "[The fire]* taught the folly and the awful danger of blocking up fire escapes so that they are impassable when needed most." Turn-of-the-century sweatshops had often been unfairly blamed for periodic epidemics of contagious diseases, and Miss Richman echoed the quaint medical theories of the day:

The desire to save money often leads men to break the law.... Rather than pay more rent for extra space in which to place his workmen, the manufacturer of clothing, for example, gives out a portion of his work to be done elsewhere.... Most of the workers are poor foreigners.... A single case of [a] disease among the workers in a sweat shop, will throw off enough germs to infect all the other workmen.... The contagion does not end here, unfortunately. Not only may each man who becomes ill carry the disease into his own home, but the germs in the workroom may fall upon the clothing made there,

and they are carried with it into the stores where it is sold, and from there into the homes of the people who buy it.

And of course the pushcarts did not escape her ire:

Worse even than the slovenly housekeepers are the men who sell fish and vegetables from wagons or push carts and drop the refuse from their stock upon the pavements. Yet they are the very ones who should be most careful to keep the streets clean, since they do business in them, free of charge, to save paying rent as others must do for a store. ... Scattering refuse in the street is a sign of bad breeding; it is also forbidden by law.

In 1912, with Ernest H. Lehman, she was working on another book, about methods of teaching Jewish ethics, which the Jewish Chautauqua Society of Philadelphia planned to publish. Among her other projected plans was the establishment of a correspondence course for teachers in religious schools. Her memoirs, to be titled *Forty Years in the New York Public Schools*, had been promised to the Macmillan Company.

In June, Miss Richman sailed for Europe with a group of friends, intending a summer holiday. At the outset of the trip, with her usually splendid constitution, she felt fine. But during the crossing she felt increasingly ill. Seasickness was blamed, but when she landed at Cherbourg her condition was so poor that she was rushed by train to the American Hospital in Paris. There her condition was diagnosed as appendicitis, with “complications.”

It was of these that she died a few days later.

*Miss Richman’s fire was fictional. Three years after they were written, the Triangle fire made her words seem prophetic.

4

AN OCCUPATION FOR GENTLEMEN

Despite the well-intentioned efforts of the do-gooders and reformers, and a general improvement in the immigrants' economic status, there was still plenty of crime on the Lower East Side. It was almost inevitable in an area so densely packed with humanity. East Siders grew accustomed to hearing the periodic sounds of human screams rising from tenement streets and windows, and quickly learned to ignore them. The scream might mean a simple domestic argument, or it might mean that someone was being murdered, but in any case it was wisest not to become involved. If one did, and the police came, the innocent bystander was often hauled off to jail with the offender. Much of the crime was youthful hooliganism. Certain blocks were considered Irish territory, others were Italian, and still more were Jewish. None of the three groups got along with the others, but the Irish and Italian street gangs, being Catholic, tended to side together against the "Christ-killers." The Jewish youths rarely carried knives, but the Irish and Italians did, and taunts and insults between the gangs frequently led to fights, stabbings, killings, followed by vendettas of revenge.

In the summer months, each ethnic gang had staked out a particular strip of East River shoreline where the boys swam naked from the docks. These preserves, however, were always being invaded by bands of youths from enemy territory, and there were water fights and drownings. Jewish youths, instilled from the time of infancy with the idea that education was the best avenue out of the ghetto, were not often truants. But the Irish and Italians were less scrupulous about school attendance, and the Jewish youth forced to walk home from school through a hostile neighborhood often found himself confronted with a knife-wielding band of Irish boys demanding that

he drop his trousers to show whether or not he was circumcised. If he were not circumcised “enough,” the enemy gang would try to perform the operation for him. Doughtier Jewish boys soon learned to give out as good as they got. If you could put up a good fight, after all, you earned for yourself that intangible asset, respect.

It had been discovered that there was money to be made out of this touchy ethnic situation. For a few pennies a day, a beleaguered Jewish boy found that he could purchase the “protection” of an older or tougher Italian or Irishman. Or the tougher Jew might hire out to protect a frailer coreligionist, and become, in effect, his bodyguard. The protection notion quickly spread to involve the business community as well, and the shopkeeper and café owner learned that hiring a protector on a monthly basis was practical insurance against having his premises looted or vandalized. On this level, the protection business became quite lucrative, and many Jewish entrepreneurs—as well as Italians—became involved in it. No one seems to have given much thought to the legality of the protection business—or racket, as some called it. Paying protection was a nuisance, but a necessary one, part of the overhead and the cost of doing business, and the price was simply passed on to the consumer.

The Jewish press of the Lower East Side in the early 1900s tended to overlook Jewish crime. The press was aware of it, of course, but preferred to underplay it. It was an embarrassment, and to make too much fuss about it might fan the embers of anti-Semitism, that ominous presence that always hovered close by in the Jewish consciousness. Meanwhile, Jewish parents worried lest their children be attracted by the flamboyant and obviously expensive life-styles of some of the more successful Jewish criminals.

Hundreds of Jewish girls, unable or unwilling to work in the garment-industry sweatshops, had turned to prostitution. One particularly poor area, not far from the old Third Avenue elevated, was notorious for its “houses of iniquity,” as pious Jews preferred to call them. Pretty Jewish girls also openly walked the streets in fancy dresses, servicing their customers from tiny rented rooms or, for a lower fee, on stoops or while draped across garbage cans in back alleys. Percentages of their earnings were collected by Jewish pimps, also well dressed, a number of whom were said to have murdered girls who cheated them. Running gambling operations was by no means an exclusively Italian occupation. A number of Jews ran illicit

gambling parlors in tenement basements or on rooftops. And along a certain section of Delancey Street the crap games were played in the open air on the sidewalk. Periodically, the police came through and broke them up, but within half an hour the games would be proceeding as enthusiastically as before the interruption.

In fact, when a Jew and an Italian could put aside their religious differences to become partners in a gambling venture, they frequently made an unbeatable combination. In other words, Jewish crime—and it is important to remember that it was often not thought of as crime, but as a business dedicated to fulfilling certain human needs—was just another way to get ahead in the New World. It was simply one of the high-risk, high-return investment businesses that the Eastern Europeans tended to prefer.

In a sense, the Eastern Europeans were all gamblers, inured for generations to the come-and-go, win-or-lose philosophy. Life in Russia had always been a gamble, with the whims of the czar the numbers on the wheel of fortune. And when at last Lady Luck ran out for the Jews, with the odds stacked impossibly high against them, there was emigration—another gamble. The risks and the dangers for the emigrant were incredibly high, but the rewards for the winners were even higher. This gambling nature was another thing the uptown German Jews found alien and unattractive—even though the Germans had taken the same gamble two or three generations earlier, and had become successful in fields that were essentially gambling operations: stockbrokerage and retailing. But the Eastern Europeans seemed, to the Germans, to be becoming successful in all sorts of endeavors that, according to most American business standards, were most “unbusinesslike.” The tailors and seamstresses of the old country were going into the fashion business. What could be riskier or more unpredictable than the whims of fashion? Yet it was apparent that some East Side cloak-and-suiters were prospering. It made no sense. (What was overlooked was that the former Russian tailors had brought with them the concept of *sizing*, which was already revolutionizing the garment industry; before the Eastern Europeans, all men’s or women’s ready-to-wear was sold in one or two, or at the most three, sizes.) Talented songwriters, musicians, and performers, in the tradition of the Yiddish theater, were journeying to the Borscht Belt in hopes of establishing careers that would lead them to Broadway or Hollywood. (The Yiddish theater, outlawed in Russia, had

simply gone underground; it flourished anew in New York.) Others were becoming theatrical agents and producers. But what could be riskier than show business? In Russia, where Jews could not own real estate and where banks could not be trusted, Jews had tended to invest in precious stones, gold, furs, and other portables, which could be hidden from the tax collector and packed up quickly when the time came to move. In America, these people gravitated toward the fur and jewelry businesses, either as retailers or as auctioneers. Again, these were high-risk endeavors, subject to wildly fluctuating commodity prices and the fickle whims of fashion; but for those who succeeded, the returns were also high.

And crime, of course, carried the highest risks of all. It was a business so unbusinesslike that it could not properly be called a business at all, and yet the Lower East Side would also produce some of the most successful and powerful gangsters in the world. One of these arrived at Ellis Island in April, 1911, as a ten-year-old boy named Meyer Suchowljansky.

The Suchowljanskys had come from the town of Grodno, in Russian Poland, where, at least until the time of the Alexandrine pogroms, the family had been reasonably prosperous, dealing in furs, spices, and rice. Though there was ice on the walls of their house in winter, and the streets of the town ran with mud in spring, the house was built of wood and had a wooden floor—signs of status. Then the pogroms had come. Meyer Suchowljansky's father emigrated to New York first. A few years later, he was able to send for his wife and son.

From Grodno, young Meyer Suchowljansky brought with him two vivid and violent memories. One was of a local rabbi who had been walking home one night across a field and stumbled on the body of a Christian girl who had been raped and bludgeoned to death with a stone. Unfortunately, the rabbi took the unwise course of running to tell the authorities what he had found. To his further misfortune, the authorities he notified were two Russian Orthodox priests. The priests, arriving at the site, immediately decided that the rabbi himself had committed the act, and that his purpose was to use the girl's blood in making Passover matzos.* The rabbi was arrested, taken to prison, and tortured for two years. For a time, he was kept in a dungeon beneath the church. Finally, in a public ceremony, his body was cut in quarters while he was still alive, and the quarters were hung on

display on the walls of Grodno. Only after a number of weeks was the Jewish community given permission to cut him down and bury him.

The second memory was of a visit to Grodno by a young Jewish revolutionary who had held a meeting at Meyer's grandfather's house. Young Meyer remembered the revolutionary soldier's words: "Jews! Why do you just sit around like stupid sheep and allow them to come and kill you, steal your money, kill your sons and rape your daughters. Aren't you ashamed? You must stand up and fight. You are men like other men. I have been a soldier in the Turkish army. I was taught to fight. A Jew can fight. I will teach you how. We have no arms, but it doesn't matter. We can use sticks and stones. Even if you're going to die, at least do it with honor. Fight back! Stop being cowards. Stop lying down like stupid sheep. Don't be frightened. Hit them and they'll run. If you are going to die, then die fighting. Protect your beloved ones. Your womenfolk should be able to rely on you."

Fight back. This would become the principal watchword in Meyer Suchowljansky's life.

Physically, however, Suchowljansky was far from prepossessing. As a scrawny child of twelve, he looked three or four years younger than his age. But he had large, bright, intense eyes that flashed dangerously when he was angry, and he soon earned a reputation in his neighborhood as a boy who, even when he was outweighed and outnumbered, never ran away from a fight. When attacked by older bullies, little Meyer would fight back with his teeth and fingernails, as well as with his knees, elbows, feet, and fists. Even when he lost a fight, his performance was impressive, and it had to be admitted that the little fellow was no coward. For this, he earned no small amount of admiration and respect.

He was also a bright boy—particularly good at mathematics—and, though he remained a dutiful Jewish son, he also very quickly became wise to the ways of the East Side streets. One of his weekly chores was to carry his mother's freshly made *cholent*—the meat and vegetable pie traditionally served on the Jewish Sabbath—to a nearby bakery to be slow cooked (his mother's oven was too small). To pay the baker for this service, five cents was scrupulously set aside each week. Meyer's route on this Friday errand took him along Delancey Street, where the noisy sidewalk crap games took place, and he would watch with fascination as the excited players exhorted

their dice to fall in the desired combinations, and listen to their whoops of delight when they won and gathered up their take. One day, when he was about twelve, Meyer decided to throw the baker's nickel into the game. He immediately lost it. He was then forced to return home with the uncooked pie and tell his mother that there would be no *cholent* for the Sabbath meal.

His mother's reaction was one of such utter desolation—she did not scold or punish him, but simply sat silently weeping—that Meyer that night made a solemn promise to himself. It was not, as his mother might have hoped, never to gamble again. Instead, he promised himself that the next time he gambled he would win.

For the next few weeks, standing at a little distance from the play, he studied the crap games. He soon noticed that some of the regular players were obviously shills, or come-ons. He also observed the tactics of the “mechanics,” as they were called—men who could conceal as many as six dice in the palm of a hand, and by gently rubbing the indentations of the cubes with the tips of their fingers, could toss them in any combination they wanted. He noticed that whenever a greenhorn joined a game he was usually allowed to win—for a while. Then, when his excitement reached such a pitch that he tossed in his whole weekly paycheck, he lost. Circulating among the players, Meyer also became aware of the loan sharks, who offered loans to losing players—at who knew what elevated rates of interest—to encourage them to stay in the game. Finally, he realized that the men who acted as bankers in the street games were not the actual bankers at all. Certain well-dressed men, most of whom appeared to be Italian, were always found not far from the action in the street. These men never gambled. They might have been casual observers or passersby. But they watched the games very closely, and from time to time scribbled little notes on scraps of paper. These were the men who ran the games, who rented the sidewalk space, and periodically they approached the bankers and collected their lion's share of the take.

Having determined the proper moment to enter as well as to leave a game, Meyer ventured another *cholent* nickel, and won. He then wandered on to another game, waited for the right moment, and won again. Soon he would never have to worry about losing the money for his mother's *cholent* again, because he had a considerable wad of cash stuffed into a hole in his mattress. It was at that point, he would declare later, that he decided his

life's career would be as a gambler, but as a gambler of a special sort. Never, he would caution friends, gamble with money that you cannot afford to lose, because, in the end, the gambler always loses. No winning streak can last forever. In gambling, the only one who consistently wins is the man who runs the gambling house, and who owns the roulette wheels, the crap tables, the blackjack tables, and the slot machines. And the beauty of the gambling business is that, though the owner might extend a bit of judicious credit here and there, it is otherwise cash, all cash.

With this philosophy Meyer Suchowljansky, with his name abbreviated to Meyer Lansky, would go on to become the guiding genius of Las Vegas, to become the king of casino gambling in Havana and, later, the Bahamas, and to reach the point where he would be one of the richest men in America and regarded as the unquestioned financial linchpin of the mob.

The young Shmuel Gelbfisz had found that in America his Polish name was an unpronounceable mouthful, and so it was first modified to Samuel Goldfish. But under whatever name he used he was at heart a gambler; in later years an entire file cabinet in his office would bear the label GAMBLING and be filled with the records of his wins and losses, and scribbled IOUs for huge sums from such Hollywood tycoons as Louis B. Mayer, Irving Thalberg, David Selznick, and Harry Conn. In the beginning, however, he was just a young man on the make, looking for a chance to grab the brass ring from the merry-go-round whenever it might appear.

His first job in New York was as a telegraph delivery boy, and his first address was a rooming house in the Bronx. In the evenings he attended public night-school classes to learn English, and supplemented these lessons by reading old newspapers he fished out of trash cans. His scholarship was desultory, and his mastery of the language was imperfect, at best. But he had not been delivering telegrams long before, in one of his secondhand newspapers, he ran across an ad for a job as a glove cutter in upstate Gloversville, New York, then the glove-making capital of the country. He decided to journey there.

Gloversville—originally called Stump City—was a drab little factory town dominated by mills and tanneries that turned out silk and leather gloves and mittens. But the glove and other subsidiary industries had made

a number of local families reasonably rich. And, as he had been from his park bench outside London's Carlton House, Sam Goldfish was awed by the visible trappings of wealth and power. Gloversville's premier hotel was the Kingsborough, and in his off-work hours, Goldfish spent much time outside the hotel's gilt-and-glass doors, watching the well-dressed guests pass in and out of the ornate lobby and chandelier-hung dining room.

But the glove-cutting job itself turned out to be mechanical and boring, and Sam decided that the real excitement—and money—in the glove business was in selling. He persuaded his employer to lend him, in return for a cash deposit, a batch of gloves, and set off as a traveling salesman, given as his territory the Hudson River Valley between New York and Albany. In this role, he quickly discovered his true talent—as a master of ballyhoo. Spreading open his sample case, gesticulating wildly with his hands—a lifelong mannerism—he would wax rhapsodic over the virtues of his gloves, while moaning and clapping his hand to his forehead over the folly of retailers whose orders he deemed too small. Nor was he averse to a bit of bribery. For placing larger orders, buyers got not only bigger discounts but also little gifts of cash.

Within a year, Sam Goldfish was his company's top salesman, and was earning ten thousand dollars in annual commissions, a princely income in turn-of-the-century dollars. Still, on his trips back to Gloversville to place his orders, he somehow felt himself “not good enough” to pass the inspection of the haughty doorman and headwaiter of the Kingsborough Hotel. Like many immigrants, Sam distrusted banks. A man whom he had befriended in New York, who happened to be the stationmaster at Grand Central Station, handled his money for him, and acted as his banker, paying him a little interest on his funds. This was convenient because, on his selling travels, Sam Goldfish was always passing through Grand Central. It was also habit-forming, and later on he would set the style for other movie moguls who, like royalty, never carried cash.

Sam Goldfish's entry into show business was quite accidental. In 1912, when he was admitting to being thirty but may actually have been thirty-three,* he met a young Russian-Jewish girl named Blanche Lasky, who called herself an actress and had been playing at one of the little Catskill resort hotels that lay along Sam's selling route. Blanche Lasky was half of a moderately successful vaudeville musical team with her brother Jesse. Jesse

Lasky played the violin and Blanche played the piano. They also sang and danced, and Jesse Lasky had a tap-dance routine that he performed while warbling on a cornet. The Laskys' was an up-and-down life of one-night stands, but the glove salesman was immediately stages truck. He married Blanche Lasky later that year, and moved into the apartment that she, her brother, and mother shared in Brooklyn.

One Sunday afternoon not long afterward, Sam and his new wife and brother-in-law went to see a film at a movie house on New York's Thirty-fourth Street. It was a first for Sam Goldfish. One of the shorts on the program happened to include a pillow-fight sequence featuring a young actress named Mary Pickford. Sam Goldfish found himself captivated by Miss Pickford's image on the screen, and, simultaneously, by the notion of making his own motion pictures. It was obvious that audiences were delighted with the primitive new medium of the "flicker show." Among other things, the early movies appealed to immigrants of any variety. The plots were simple, obvious, scary, or funny in a slapstick sort of way, and no language barrier stood in the way of understanding what was going on in the silent shorts. And they were cheap: admission to the movies cost only a few pennies.

That evening, Sam, Blanche, and Jesse went home to his mother-in-law's house, and sat down with Mrs. Lasky to talk about the possibility of a movie-making venture. Blanche, who had been brought up in a small town in southern California and preferred the climate there, pointed out that more and more movies were being made on the West Coast because of the clearer air and longer hours of sunshine. Also, not having to heat a studio in winter was an important cost consideration.

The next question was money. Sam had saved some ten thousand dollars through his Grand Central banker, and offered to put this in. Jesse Lasky also had some savings, and so did his mother. The kitchen-table meeting in Brooklyn had not even reached the stage of deciding what sort of film they were going to produce when Jesse Lasky asked, "Who will we get to direct?" Sam said, "What about Cecil?"

Cecil was a young and footloose sometime playwright, sometime actor named Cecil Blount DeMille, with whom Sam and Jesse regularly shot craps on Saturday nights at the Lasky-Goldfish home. Cecil DeMille had dabbled in a number of other business ventures, none of them successful,

and lived in the shadow of an older brother, William C. DeMille, who, before the age of thirty-five, had written and produced a number of hugely popular plays with David Belasco and was now quite rich. Perhaps, it was suggested, if Cecil DeMille were brought on the team, William DeMille might be persuaded to invest in the venture, since it was known that Cecil had trouble making his rent.

Cecil DeMille had never directed a motion picture, but he was immediately enthusiastic. Furthermore, he proposed that the new partnership should not content itself with making a simpleminded little one-reeler of the sort that were being shown all over town in the vaudeville houses, interspersed with live acts and performing dogs. DeMille wanted to produce a full-length film that told a real *story*, something that had never been done before. Though none of the three partners had had any experience whatever at making films, they were all charged with enormous optimism. As Goldfish said to Lasky, “We’ve never produced a picture, and DeMille has never directed one. We should be *great!*”

Together, the fledgling group managed to round up a total of twenty-five thousand dollars, in bits and pieces, with Sam Goldfish supplying the major share, to capitalize their film. Cecil DeMille had asked his brother for five thousand, but William, who had staked Cecil in too many other, fruitless enterprises, declined. (Had he been more foresighted, William DeMille could have become a one-fifth owner of Paramount Pictures, which was what, as a result of later mergers and acquisitions, the Goldfish-Lasky-DeMille organization eventually evolved into.) The group then paid ten thousand dollars—a staggering sum in those days—for the film rights to a stage play called *The Squaw Man*, and hired a popular young stage actor named Dustin Farnum to play the title role.*

Just before shooting was to start, Goldfish suggested that DeMille take a quick trip to upstate New York, where another film was being made, just to get the hang of how movie directing was done. A last-minute crisis almost prevented DeMille’s trip. It seemed that his grocer was pressing him for a twenty-five-dollar delinquent bill. But Goldfish paid that, and DeMille was off.

DeMille spent an hour or so lurking around the shooting location, and returned to New York to tell his partners that his crash course in filmmaking had shown him that there was nothing to it. All one needed was a pair of

riding boots, jodhpurs, and a megaphone. Then Goldfish, Lasky, DeMille, their star, and their script boarded a train and headed west.

The making of *The Squaw Man* was as confused and haphazard as the creation of the little company. They had planned to shoot the film in Flagstaff, Arizona, which no one had told them was in the mountains. Arriving in Flagstaff in the middle of a blinding blizzard, they quickly reboarded the train and continued to Los Angeles. En route, DeMille had hired, as his assistant director, a man who sold Navaho jewelry along the aisles of the Santa Fe trains. Once in California, the group rented a barn in Santa Monica for a studio (today, ironically, the giant CBS Television studios occupy the site), and, to save money, DeMille cast both his wife and his young daughter in the picture.

The initial results were not “great,” exactly. When the first print of *The Squaw Man* was shown, the images jumped chaotically all over the screen. The actors seemed to slide off the edges of the frames. Reshooting was out of the question. All the money was gone, and Dustin Farnum, whose final paycheck had bounced, was threatening to sue. In desperation, Sam Goldfish carried the print back east with him to a Philadelphia filmmaker who thought he might be able to fix it. Repairs were made, which involved trimming the edges of the frames, even though this meant that, in certain scenes, actors’ arms and legs and even faces had to be cut off.

Sam Goldfish then arranged a publicity campaign for the film’s opening in New York. On opening night, however, both he and Lasky were too nervous to make a public appearance, and instead sneaked into the theater near the end of the picture. To their amazement and enormous relief, the audience was laughing and cheering. *The Squaw Man* was a hit, and during its run would earn more than twice the amount of money the partners had put into it. The crazy gamble had paid off.

The Squaw Man would also earn a place, of sorts, in motion picture history. Though D. W. Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation* is usually cited as being the first “long” movie ever produced, *The Squaw Man*, which came to the screen in 1914, predated *The Birth of a Nation*—or any other American film of four reels or longer—by more than a year.

The success of *The Squaw Man* brought the Goldfish-Lasky group to the attention of another newly arrived West Coast filmmaker, Adolph Zukor. By 1914, both Adolph Zukor and Samuel Goldfish were reasonably rich and successful film men. Like Goldfish and Lasky, Zukor was an Eastern European Jew, born in Hungary in 1873, who had come to America in the usual fashion, by steerage, with forty dollars sewn into the lining of his second-best waistcoat for safekeeping by his thrifty mother, which amount was to stake his future in the New World. Zukor, too, had got into the movie business almost by accident. He had made his way to Chicago, where he had gone into the fur business with a man named Morris Kohn. By 1899, Kohn and Zukor had prospered sufficiently in furs to open a branch office in New York. There, Zukor's principal contact was another furrier, Marcus Loew, whom Zukor knew from many fur-selling trips between New York and the Midwest. Zukor and Kohn, figuring that it would be politically prudent to discuss their New York move with Mr. Loew—whose territory they were in a sense planning to invade—sought him out. Loew was surprisingly helpful. He not only offered to initiate the two Chicagoans into the New York fur fraternity, but he also helped the two men and their families find apartments in the city. Mr Loew found an apartment for Mr. Zukor in the same block as his own, and the two men and their wives became friends—for a while, at least.

In the meantime, while the Zukors and Kohns were moving to New York, one of Morris Kohn's cousins was pestering his family and friends for money to open a penny arcade. He had found one financial backer in a former peddler from Buffalo named Mitchell Mark, who had branched into the penny arcade business and owned two arcades in Buffalo and one in Harlem. In 1899, a vacant dairy kitchen on Fourteenth Street near bustling Union Square—then one of the chief shopping areas of of the city (Tiffany's was right down the street)—had caught Mr. Mark's eye, and he was eager to turn it into yet another arcade, in which he would offer one-reeler flicker shows. But the owner of the Fourteenth Street property was leery of leasing his store in such a high-class neighborhood to a man of unproven worth—and credit—like Mitchell Mark. So, using Morris Kohn's cousin as an intermediary, Mark persuaded the two “respectable furriers,” Kohn and Zukor, to be his front men in the deal, with their presence providing at least psychological reassurance that the rent would be paid. In

return for this favor, Zukor and Kohn were given a share in the business, which they named the Automatic One Cent Vaudeville Company. The long, narrow arcade was lined solidly on both sides with machines where, for a penny, the viewer could catch primitive little movies with such titles as “A Ride on the ‘L,’” “Creeping Jimmie,” and “French High Kickers.” Thus, the two furriers found themselves in show business. Soon the fur business would be no more than a memory.

The Fourteenth Street arcade was an immediate success. It did not, as might have been expected, add a touch of sleaziness to a fashionable shopping district. On the contrary, it had the atmosphere of a well-run toy store and attracted a well-heeled clientele. Matrons who lived on Murray Hill could leave their children there, with pocketfuls of pennies, while they shopped the “Ladies’ Mile,” or Broadway from Twenty-third to Eighth streets, at Airman’s, Arnold Constable, Lord and Taylor, and Siegel-Cooper. The automatic Vaudeville featured, as a free attraction, a clever little contraption that had been Morris Kohn’s brainchild. This was a miniature electric train that circulated among the various coin machines. As it passed, the pennies from the hoppers of the machines were automatically dumped into its freight cars. As many customers lined up to watch the little train as did to play the machines, and the constant clatter of falling coins added the kind of excitement usually associated with a gambling casino.

One of the men who came to see the train at its work was Marcus Loew. Later, Loew would admit that the sight of all that money tumbling in made him also decide to get out of furs and into penny arcades. He decided it was time for Zukor and Kohn to repay the favor that they owed him. He wanted a piece of the Automatic One Cent Vaudeville Company.

Since Zukor, Kohn, and Mark had already embarked on ambitious plans to expand their operations into Philadelphia, Boston, and Newark, they were delighted by the possibility of a new injection of capital and quickly agreed to let Loew buy shares in their enterprise. At first, it seemed a winning combination. But once all four men were in partnership together there was trouble. As in any all-cash business, employee theft was a constant problem. The men who operated the flicker shows and the toy train had to be watched like hawks, and presently the four partners were all snooping on one another. Each began keeping his own set of books, and needless to say, no two sets agreed. By 1904, Loew and Zukor were bickering over the

ledger sheets, accusing each other of stealing from the company, and disagreeing about who deserved what share of the burgeoning business. Both had agreed that twenty-five hundred dollars a year was a reasonable take-home pay for each, but, as Loew put it later, “Adolph didn’t think I was worth twenty-five hundred a year, and I had the same opinion of him.” Loew, who had been the last to join the quadrumvirate, became the first to withdraw his investment. In 1905 he opened his own arcade, which he called People’s Vaudeville, in what had been a vacant storefront on the corner of Seventh Avenue and Twenty-third Street.

Next to pull out of Automatic Vaudeville was Morris Kohn, taking his electric train with him. He, too, set up shop elsewhere. Mitchell Mark, meanwhile, was considered a foolish dreamer. He foresaw a far more dazzling future for motion pictures than any of the others did, and insisted that customers for movies, instead of standing in front of glass-windowed boxes in penny arcades, would one day settle themselves into plush-covered seats in front of giant screens in movie palaces with golden carved cherubs on their ceilings. He withdrew from Automatic Vaudeville in 1905 to concentrate on building theaters. The culmination of his dream, which was not far off, was the opening of the Mark Strand Theatre at Broadway and Forty-seventh Street, a thirty-three hundred seat showplace in the heart of the theater district.

That left Adolph Zukor with what was left of Automatic Vaudeville, which, with its principal crowd-pleaser, the train, removed, was not much. The five-year collaboration also set a pattern for internecine warfare and distrust that would dominate the motion picture business—which would become an almost exclusively Eastern European business—for the next half-century and more.

For a while, Adolph Zukor operated a nickelodeon, next door to the old Fourteenth Street location, which did well enough—as did anything, it seemed, that offered the magic flicker shows. Then, with more breezy self-confidence than anything else, he formed what he called the Famous Players Company, the purpose of which, according to Zukor’s slogan, was to produce “Famous Plays and Famous Players.” His windy press releases, however, failed to mention that he owned no famous plays, nor did he have any famous players under contract.

It was another gamble. But the gambler must allow for luck, and in 1911 Luck reached out and touched the shoulder of the thirty-eight-year-old Adolph Zukor. A French silent film, called *Queen Elizabeth*, had been exhibited with success in Europe. It starred “the divine” Sarah Bernhardt, the most famous actress in the world at that time. Its subtitles were in French, which was the only language Miss Bernhardt could perform in, and this fact had persuaded American impresarios that *Queen Elizabeth* was not exportable for American audiences. The American rights to the film were therefore both available and cheap. But Zukor knew that, on earlier American tours, Bernhardt—speaking in French in such stage vehicles as *Camille* and *Fedora*—had left audiences cheering and standing on their seats at the end of her performances, even when no one had understood a word she had said. The French subtitles could easily be redone in English. Would it matter that the words on the screen would not exactly coincide with the movements of the Divine Sarah’s lips? Zukor decided not. The audience would be paying more attention to Bernhardt’s exaggerated gestures, the wild tossing of her head, the beating of her breast, and to her famous blazing eyes.

Zukor acquired the rights to *Queen Elizabeth*, and the subtitles were translated. He then arranged for a celebrity-studded premiere in the summer of 1912 in a first-rate legitimate theater—the Lyceum on Broadway. The offering was a huge critical and popular success, and Adolph Zukor was hailed as a production genius. And so, when Zukor approached Goldfish and Lasky in 1914 and proposed a merger, it sounded like another wonderful idea. It would be a pooling of both talent and money. The resulting company was named Famous Players–Lasky. Zukor was president of the new company, Goldfish was chairman of the board, and Lasky was vice-president.

Almost immediately, however, Zukor found Sam Goldfish as difficult to deal with—as stubborn, temperamental, and unpredictable—as any of his previous partners. The two men couldn’t agree on who was running the company, or who was to make decisions. The movie business had become—as it remains today—a curiously bifurcated business, with a certain basic clumsiness built into it. It operated on two coasts, the East and the West. Production was all done in California. But the largest audiences were in eastern cities, along with the newspapers and critics that mattered the most.

Even more important, the banks and investment houses, upon whom the movie companies relied for financing, were all in New York. Everything that was done in Hollywood, then as now, was predicated on “what New York says.” Then as now, motion picture producers were constantly having to shuttle back and forth between the East Coast and the West.

When Sam Goldfish was in New York talking to the money men, and Zukor was in California trying to grind out movies, Goldfish took over policymaking. And when Goldfish was in California, and Zukor was in New York, the opposite happened, and Goldfish took over production—and even the direction—of the films. The limbo periods—those four or five days it took to travel across the continent by train, and whoever was traveling was incommunicado—were worst of all, when each man was convinced that the other was scheming diabolically behind his back.

To make matters even worse, Sam Goldfish and Jesse Lasky were crossing swords. The problem was Blanche Lasky Goldfish’s complaints about her husband. Blanche, it seemed, even though she now had a young daughter to care for, felt very much pushed into the background by the two most important men in her life, her brother and her husband. She felt, with some justification, that if it had not been for her, the two men might never have come together in their filmmaking venture. Now she was being ignored on the sidelines of their mounting success. “If I hadn’t suggested the flickers that afternoon in New York, where would they be?” she complained. Blanche also considered herself a performer, and whereas men like Cecil B. DeMille put their wives and other relatives into their films, Blanche had never been cast in a single Goldfish picture. On top of it all, she suspected that now that Sam was in show business, he had formed a fondness for younger showgirls, and she may have been right. Sam’s office door was often locked while he conducted lengthy interviews with aspiring actresses. On his transcontinental trips, he was frequently accompanied by female “secretaries.” And there was no doubt that Sam Goldfish was fond of beautiful women. His film “discoveries” were invariably female, and he spent a great deal of time fussing over his actresses’ hairstyles, makeup, and dress. Blanche was developing a full-scale case of classic wifely jealousy. There were the customary bitter accusations, recriminations, scenes. Sam Goldfish, meanwhile, a big, barrel-chested man with a bullet-shaped head, the wide, square jaw of a fighter and a temper to go with it, was not the sort

of man to be bothered by the whinings of a mere woman. The more Blanche complained and demanded, the more he cut her off with a door slammed in her face.

Blanche took her complaints to her mother, who naturally sympathized with her daughter. Blanche also complained to her brother, who found himself very much in the middle. He was unhappy about his brother-in-law's presumed philanderings, but there was little he could do about the situation. Sam, after all, was not only the chairman of the board of the company; he was also the major stockholder in it, and in a very real sense, Jesse Lasky was Sam's employee. The fact that for a number of years Sam, Blanche, Jesse, and Mrs. Lasky had lived under the same roof only made matters stickier.

At her mother's suggestion, Blanche Goldfish hired a private detective to monitor her husband's activities, and the detective's findings seemed to confirm her suspicions. Confronted with this, Sam flew into a towering rage, and when his wife left their house to consult a lawyer, he had all the locks changed and refused to let her back in. The ensuing divorce proceedings were bitter and acrimonious on all sides, with a great deal of ugly name-calling, and with Sam, among other things, claiming that his small daughter, Ruth, was probably not his own child. One result of the divorce would be that Ruth, custody of whom was given to her mother, would not learn for twenty years who her father really was.

Inevitably, the domestic upheavals *chez* Goldfish had an effect on the already uneasy partnership. His problems at home seemed to make Sam even more irascible and autocratic at the office, and during one of Sam's out-of-town trips Adolph Zukor flatly told his board of directors that he could no longer work with Mr. Goldfish. Either he or Goldfish would have to go. When Sam returned from his travels, he faced a chilly board of directors who asked for his resignation. Huffily, he resigned, uttering, according to legend, his famous ultimatum, "Include me out!" Later, he would disclaim this comment, saying only, "I didn't think it was a very nice thing for them to do." But it was not an altogether un-nice thing for Sam Goldfish. To help persuade him to relinquish his chairmanship, he was given an even million dollars' worth of stock in Famous Players-Lasky.

Now on his own, like so many others of his competitive and rising generation, Sam Goldfish turned his back on both Zukor and his former

brother-in-law, and went scouting for new partners with whom to invest his money. Soon he found them—two brothers named Edgar and Archibald Selwyn, who had been successful producers of legitimate plays on Broadway—and with them formed the Goldwyn Pictures Corporation, a name taken from the first syllable of Sam’s last name and the last syllable of the Selwyns’. Into this new arrangement, Sam brought his million dollars, and the Selwyns brought a healthy clutch of stage plays ready to be turned into movies.

In 1918 Sam Goldfish petitioned the New York courts to have his name legally changed to Goldwyn. There had been titters among audiences, he had heard, when the words PRODUCED BY SAMUEL GOLDFISH appeared on the screen, and Sam was no longer a man who took titters lightly. Since Sam, for corporate reasons, had taken the precaution of having the name Goldwyn copyrighted, consent was required from the copyright holder. But since the copyright holder was Sam himself, who was also president of the company, this technicality presented no problem. Permission was granted by the court. As Judge Learned Hand put it, “A self-made man may prefer a self-made name.”

*The charges of Jewish ritual murder of children, and cannibalism, date back to pre-Christian times, along with the bizarre claim that human sacrifice is condoned by the Talmud. The canard has been repeated throughout the centuries, and in the fourteenth century even made its way into Chaucer’s “Prioress’s Tale”: “O yong Hugh of Lincoln, slayn also/ With cursed Jewes, as it is notable/ For it is but a litel whyle ago,/ Preye eek for us.”

*More than personal vanity may have accounted for the uncertainty about Sam’s real age, and there may have been a more poignant explanation. In Russia, Jewish parents often falsified the ages of their male children, in order to postpone for as long as possible the age of forced conscription into the czarist army. In one community near Kiev, the Jewish congregation actually burned down its own synagogue to destroy birth records. It seemed that more girl children than boys had been born that year, and the congregation feared official reprisals if the shortage in the supply of males was discovered.

*After whom Dustin Hoffman’s star-struck mother named her son.

5

HEROES AND HEROINES

Leah Sarnoff liked to describe her four sons—David, Lew, Morris, and Irving—in terms of superlatives. One was “the handsomest.” Another was “the smartest.” The third was “the kindest.” But David—“Ah, David,” his mother would say, “David has all the luck.”

Within four days of his arrival in New York, David Sarnoff had found a job selling newspapers on Grand Street on the Lower East Side to help support his younger brothers and sisters. He was nine years old, and the secret of his success as a newsboy was not so much luck as speed. When Sarnoff began hawking copies of the *Tageblatt* in 1900, which happened to be the year Rose Pastor began submitting her wistful romantic verses to the same paper, it was necessary for the newsboy to snatch his bale of papers as it tumbled off the conveyor belt, snap its binding wire with a jackknife, and run with the papers, shouting “Extra! Extra!” through the streets. The papers were not returnable, and if a newsboy did not dispose of his quota quickly, the business would go to his competition. David Sarnoff was a small, wiry, intense boy with large dark eyes, jug ears, and a ski-jump nose. He was also quick on his feet, and soon realized that he could be even quicker and more efficient if he were mobilized. Taking his cue from the pushcart vendors, he fashioned a makeshift cart out of a packing crate and four mismatched bicycle wheels picked up on the street. With this contraption he was able to build up a route along which he sold as many as three hundred *Tageblatts* a day. His profit was a penny for every two newspapers sold—fifty percent, since the *Tageblatt* retailed for a penny a copy—and this could add up to earnings of \$1.50 a day, or \$7.50 a week (the paper did not publish on the Sabbath). He was also able to earn an

additional \$1.50 a week singing soprano in the synagogue choir. This, it might be pointed out, was a princely income, compared with what older children were being paid for long hours of work in the sweatshops, and David's working day was seldom more than two hours long. This left him time to go to school.

It was not long before the enterprising new newsboy in town caught the attention of a group that called itself the Metropolitan News Company. Metropolitan News was a commercial distributor, or jobber, that bought newspapers in bulk and delivered them to newsstands, candy stores, and other retail outlets, using a horse and wagon. As the *Tageblatt's* biggest customer, Metropolitan got the first papers off the presses, before anyone else. Sarnoff's business was street sales and some home delivery, but it looked attractive enough to Metropolitan for them to approach him with an offer to buy his route. At first, their offer was ten dollars, but Metropolitan's price rose steadily until it reached the staggering figure of twenty-five dollars, which was almost an offer he could not afford to refuse—more than a month's earnings for one little route. But, instead of accepting, Sarnoff took a gamble and made a counterproposal. Metropolitan could have his route—he could always build up another—for nothing. In return, Sarnoff asked only for the first three hundred copies of the daily press run, enough to give his cart a head start. The deal was accepted. Within weeks, he had built up a new route, and, as he had expected, Metropolitan was soon after him again with an offer to buy that one.

David Sarnoff could probably have gone on parlaying his paper routes into cash until Metropolitan controlled the entire Lower East Side, which, of course, was what it wanted. But there was danger here. In 1902, a rival Yiddish publication had been founded by an enterprising young Russian immigrant named Abraham Cahan. This was the *Jewish Daily Forward*, and since it offered a more socialistic, less uptown-establishment editorial point of view, it had quickly become popular with New York Jews who had been forced to leave Russia for reasons more political than anything else. Circulation wars between American dailies had become commonplace, and these had been known to be unpleasant, even bloody, with the newsboys of the competing papers most often the victims of the bloodshed. Sarnoff was wise enough to see that he could not go on expecting Metropolitan News to

pay him cash for his routes forever; they might easily resort to more forceful methods. Besides, he had another idea.

He was thirteen now, and had begun to think about owning his own newsstand. With his own stand, he could sell both *Tageblatts* and *Forwards*. He would be buying from Metropolitan News, instead of selling to them. Two of his brothers, Lew and Morris, were now old enough to help out, and their mother could fill in while the boys were at school. There was a small stand for sale uptown, at the corner of Forty-sixth Street and Tenth Avenue. It was hardly the best neighborhood in town. It was also enemy territory, in that it was largely Irish Catholic. In fact, that particular section of the West Side was already known as Hell's Kitchen. Still, the idea of newsstand ownership appealed to him, but the price—two hundred dollars—made it seem out of the question, though he could not help talking about it, and how he would run it, if only two hundred dollars could somehow miraculously be delivered into his hands. It was then that a strange stroke of luck occurred.

Returning home one evening, David noticed a mysterious stranger standing near the doorway of the Sarnoffs' tenement house. It was a woman, and she did not seem to be from the neighborhood—she was too well dressed, and her English was too precise—but she engaged him in conversation. Was it true that his father was too ill to work? (Never in good health, Abe Sarnoff had literally starved himself while working at his trade as a painter in order to send for his wife and children, and was now bedridden as a result.) Was it true that the thirteen-year-old David was now supporting his entire family? Was it true that he sang in the synagogue choir, and picked up an extra dollar or two singing at weddings and bar mitzvahs? Was it true that he needed two hundred dollars to buy a newsstand? When he had answered all these questions in the affirmative, the woman handed David Sarnoff an envelope, and then slipped quietly away into the night. In the envelope was exactly two hundred dollars. Was it a miracle, or luck, or a bit of each? David Sarnoff would not know the answer until many years later.

As the proprietors of their own newsstand, the Sarnoffs moved out of their Monroe Street tenement into slightly larger quarters, closer to their new business, on West Forty-sixth Street. And now that his mother and brothers were set up in business, with David himself making twice-daily

rounds with his cart to collect his papers for his stand, he decided that this might be the moment for him to secure a regular salaried job. Schooling for him was over, and in those days there were no working-paper requirements for someone his age to take a full-time job. While peddling newspapers he had learned a great deal about the power of the press, and had even used this knowledge to good advantage at Stuyvesant High School. In an English class, his teacher had been discussing *The Merchant of Venice*, and had held up the character of Shylock as “typical” of Jewish cruelty and greed. David Sarnoff had protested this interpretation, and had been hauled into the principal’s office for disrupting the classroom. The principal had tried to smooth things out between David and the teacher, but the teacher had been adamant: either David Sarnoff would be banned from his classroom or he, the teacher, would resign. With that, David mentioned that some of the Jewish newspapers, with whom he had connections, might be interested in the fact that New York’s public schools were teaching anti-Semitism. Miraculously, the tables were turned. David was restored to his English class, and the teacher’s resignation was accepted.

Experiences such as this had led Sarnoff to think about a career as a newspaper reporter. A reporter’s life was considered an exciting and glamorous one in those days, when dozens of New York dailies competed fiercely with one another for scoops on the biggest stories, for circulation, and for advertising space. The newspaper reporter had to be quick and resourceful, and often had to involve himself in scrapes and daring adventures, as he kept his finger on the pulse of the big city. And so, one afternoon, Sarnoff took himself down to the offices of James Gordon Bennett’s *New York Herald*, in Herald Square. Bennett, the father of sensationalist “yellow” journalism in America, had turned the *Herald* into one of the most powerful papers in town. Directed to the personnel department, Sarnoff was told that he could be used as a messenger at five dollars a week, plus ten cents an hour overtime, and was handed a uniform and a bicycle. There was only one problem: his new employer was not the *New York Herald* at all. It was the Commercial Cable Company, whose offices were next door. He had walked into the wrong building. Thus, through luck again or happy accident, the future board chairman of the Radio Corporation of America found himself, not in the newspaper business, but in the fledgling radio and electronics industry—the very

industry that, in Sarnoff's lifetime, would help account for the demise of most of New York's newspapers, including the *Herald*.

As it happened, one of Commercial Cable's biggest subscribers then was the *Herald*, and much of Sarnoff's work involved delivering telegraphed dispatches to and from the newspaper. In order to understand the priority of the messages he was transporting, it behooved him quickly to learn the Morse code. He thus, while barely in his teens, became aware of the increasing importance of radiotelegraphy—"wireless," as it was called—as a medium for transmitting news. In his spare time, he began reading everything he could find on the new communications method, and during slow periods of the day he was permitted to practice on the telegraph key, and to tap out coded conversations between his Herald Square office and a young counterpart who worked in Commercial Cable's downtown office on Broad Street.

Great strides had been made in the field of radio communications since the turn of the century. In 1901, Guglielmo Marconi's brainchild had demonstrated his global possibilities when a faint signal, beamed across the Atlantic from the Cornish coast of England, was received at Saint John's, Newfoundland, and it was not long before actual voices and scraps of music were being transmitted, albeit often very indistinctly, across the primitive airwave frequencies in addition to dots and dashes. It did not take much imagination to realize that, as techniques were perfected, the airwaves might be used to transmit entertainment, and not just news, from one part of the world to another, and that this entertainment might have commercial value, much as the movies did.

The United States Navy had gone so far as to undertake a feasibility study to determine whether or not radio signals might one day be used to replace its flocks of carrier pigeons. But the commercial possibilities of radio had failed to catch the imagination of the general public—perhaps because the technology was so hard to envision. It was easy enough to understand how the human voice, or an electric current, could be made to travel through a wire. Every child, after all, had rigged a telephone of sorts using two paper cups and a string, and the use of business and residential telephone service was expanding rapidly. But that sounds could also travel electronically through the empty ether was a difficult concept to grasp, as was the theory—which was being explored by scientists even then—that

one day a system would be devised whereby the air could also be filled with thousands of invisible colored pictures, which could be picked up by millions of home receivers. To the public, radio remained an interesting little gadget, the bailiwick of a few scientists and operators scattered in a handful of stations in remote places, but of no significant social importance. When plans for the British White Star Line's great flagship, *Titanic*, were announced, and it was learned that the vessel would be equipped with a radio communications system, most people assumed that this was no more than a promotional gimmick. When David Sarnoff tried to explain radiotelegraphy and radiotelephony to his mother, Leah Sarnoff could not understand it, and so had no idea what her son's new job entailed. This embarrassed her. When friends asked Leah what young David was up to, she told them he had become a plumber, to which they replied, "That's nice!"

Plumbing, however, was about the only enterprise David Sarnoff was not involved in. Every morning, before reporting to work at Commercial Cable, he spent four hours collecting and delivering papers to the family newsstand. In the evenings, when he was not studying electronics, there was choir practice. In the year 1906, however, when Sarnoff was not quite sixteen, two interconnected events occurred that provided a temporary setback to his career. The Jewish High Holidays, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, were approaching, and Sarnoff asked his employer for these days off, without pay, explaining that he was needed in the choir. He was bluntly told not only that he could have the days off but that, for asking, he was fired. This was a double blow because, simultaneously, his usefulness to the choir as a boy soprano was also coming to an end for natural reasons. His choirmaster had already docked him a nickle off his wages for failing to reach high C.

It was not long, though, before he found another job, with the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America. The job was lowly enough—as an office boy. And the starting pay was only \$5.50 a week, with no allowance for overtime. But its importance was that he was now working for the inventor who held the first patent for wireless telegraphy using electromagnetic waves—Marconi himself, who had also developed the antenna principle. The successor to Marconi's company would be called the Radio Corporation of America.

For the next few years, Sarnoff worked for Marconi, steadily moving upward in the ranks: to an assistant radio operator, with a salary of sixty dollars a month, and then to full operator, for seventy dollars a month. Much of his time was now spent in a series of remote outposts and on ships at sea, as a “sparks” for shipping companies that had installed the Marconi systems. In the spring of 1912, he was back in New York, where the John Wanamaker department store had placed a radio station on its top floor. A similar station had been installed in Wanamaker’s Philadelphia store, and the stated purpose of the two stations was to facilitate interoffice communications and ordering between the two branches. Actually, it was more of a public relations stunt. Wanamaker’s had suspected that, like Morris Kohn’s electric train, the presence of a radio station in the store would draw crowds, and they were right. Shoppers congregated outside the glass window of the little studio to watch young David Sarnoff briskly sending and receiving messages between New York and Philadelphia over the newfangled wireless. The station’s top-floor location served a double purpose. The reception was better from there, but it was also true that, in order to see the show, Wanamaker’s customers had to pass through all the other selling floors, which featured other temptations. It was one of the first commercial uses to which radio had been put.

In the early evening of April 14, 1912, David Sarnoff, wearing his headset and punching his little keys and buttons, was doing his routine job at Wanamaker’s—a job that may have begun to seem a bit boring, and even somewhat demeaning, since he was essentially an entertainer performing for spectators. All at once he received a faint and alien signal. It came, he quickly determined, from the S.S. *Olympic*, fourteen hundred miles away in the north Atlantic. Once he had asked that the message be repeated, its import was clear. The *Titanic*, bound for New York, had struck an iceberg at full speed, and was sinking fast. The *Olympic* was steaming to its rescue. Immediately, Sarnoff focused his radio’s full power on the *Olympic*’s signal, which repeated the SOS message again and again.

The *Titanic*, hailed as the crowning glory of the British shipbuilding industry and the pride of the White Star Line, was the largest, fastest, most luxurious ocean liner in the world. Its building and launching had been much publicized, and it had been touted as “unsinkable.” This was its maiden voyage, and aboard it for the gala crossing were hundreds of

prominent Americans and Europeans. One of the worst marine disasters in history was under way.

While trying to radio other ships that might be in the area, Sarnoff telephoned the newspapers, and within hours special editions were on the streets. As the night wore on, Wanamaker's kept its doors open, and crowds of friends and relatives of *Titanic* passengers, along with the merely curious, poured in, begging for news of survivors. Presently a police barricade had to be set up to protect Sarnoff from the mob, and give him the quiet he needed to transcribe his signals. Only a few special people were allowed into the studio with him—Vincent Astor, whose father, John Jacob Astor, was on the ship, and the sons of Isidor Straus, the head of Macy's, who was also aboard. Meanwhile, in Washington, President William Howard Taft ordered all other radio stations in the United States shut down so that nothing might interfere with the signals Sarnoff was receiving at Wanamaker's. At 2:20 A.M., Atlantic time, the news was heard that the *Titanic* had sunk.

For seventy-two hours, Sarnoff sat at his post listening, as, intermittently, the names of known survivors, who had been picked up by the *Olympic* and other radio-equipped vessels that had been in the vicinity, came trickling in. Then came the lengthening list of those known to have perished, and the word from White Star officials admitting a "horrible loss of life." John Jacob Astor's name was among the casualties. So was that of traction heir Harry Elkins Widener, who went down clutching a 1598 edition of Bacon's essays, and whose mother would donate the world's largest college library to Harvard in his memory.

Then came the tales of heroism and courage. Mr. and Mrs. Isidor Straus had each refused to enter a lifeboat without the other, preferring to go down together. Benjamin Guggenheim, of the copper-smelting family, had ordered his valet to dress him in his evening clothes, and refused to don a life jacket, since he wanted to go down like a gentleman.* There were tales of cowardice, too—of men who shouldered women and children aside to clamber aboard lifeboats first, of men who had dressed in women's clothing in order to do the same, of at least one man who had forced his way into a lifeboat wielding a pistol. In all, the total number of lives lost came to a staggering 1,513, and of the 2,224 aboard only 711 had been saved.

The *Titanic* disaster riveted public attention on the importance of radio. Many ships not equipped with radios had been much closer to the distressed liner than the *Olympic*, and had there been a means of contacting them the loss of life might have been far less. Quickly, the United States Congress passed the Radio Act, which required that all ships carrying fifty or more passengers be equipped with radios, and even those ships that carried fewer than fifty people hurried to install radios in order to stay in business. The *Titanic*'s sinking also riveted the world's attention on the Marconi system. But most of all it drew attention to the alert young hero of the day, David Sarnoff, who had manned the little station at Wanamaker's throughout the ordeal, and who now found himself an international celebrity, hero, and genius. The *Titanic*, David Sarnoff once said, "brought radio to the front, and incidentally me." Not quite two months earlier, he had celebrated his twenty-first birthday.

It was certainly the pivotal moment in his career, and one of the great moments of his life. His official biographer, Eugene Lyons (who also happened to be Sarnoff's first cousin, which may account for Lyons's occasionally awestruck tone as he describes his relative's accomplishments), tells us only that after the seventy-two-hour ordeal, without sleep, was over, Sarnoff treated himself to the luxury of a Turkish bath. But one may legitimately speculate about what may have been going through his head during those long hours. David Sarnoff was not the only man in New York who knew how to use a radio. Why, then, was he not relieved for three solid days? The fact seems to be that he refused to be relieved, and so it would not be too cynical to ask: whose sense of personal drama was operating here? There he was, for example, the Russian-born lad from the ghetto, whose mother ran a newsstand and spoke little English, who had never finished high school, and yet who, with the passing of each suspenseful hour, was writing his own myth, creating his own American hero out of a fluke of fate.

Here he was in his little studio atop Wanamaker's, suddenly rubbing shoulders with Vincent Astor, heir to one of the greatest non-Jewish American fortunes, and the Straus brothers, scions of one of New York's proudest German-Jewish families—people whom, under ordinary

circumstances, he would never have hoped to meet. It was not that Astor and the Strauses were more closely touched by the tragedy at sea than the hundreds of other anxious relatives of *Titanic* passengers who were being held at bay outside the studio by armed police. Nor were Astor and the Strauses in any way equipped to be of special help in the situation, nor were they there because they held high political office. Instead, these men had been admitted to David Sarnoff's studio under an unwritten subclause of the American Constitution, which provides that, in the land of equal opportunity, some people have more opportunity than others. These men were *important*. And David Sarnoff was important to them. Sarnoff's opportunity, as he sat tapping out and receiving his messages, was that he was offering an umbilical cord, a lifeline, between these important men and their important parents.

Following his Turkish bath, Sarnoff was rushed by taxi-cab—it may have been his first taxi ride—to Sea Gate, where radio communications were being set up between the mainland and the *Carpathia*, the ship that had finally collected all the *Titanic* survivors. By now, of course, he was the wunderkind of Wanamaker's, the man of the hour, and great cheers went up when Sarnoff arrived to take over the operation of the impromptu station. "He's here!" people cried. "He's here! Sarnoff is here!" as the flashbulbs popped.

The whole experience of having been elevated, so suddenly, to a position of power and importance must have had a profound effect on him. Certainly from that point onward David Sarnoff's life would take on something of the quality of a fairy tale, with all the curious twists of fate, irony, and coincidence associated with that genre—at least to hear him tell it. The luck of being in the right place at the right time to pick up the *Olympic*'s signals seemed to take on a mythic significance to him. He began too see himself as a kind of Horatio Alger hero—Ragged Dick, the poor newsboy, who had by chance been able to rescue the drowning millionaire, and had been rewarded with promotions into the highest ranks of commerce. As Sarnoff himself began his rise to the pinnacle of the American communications industry, he would supply his life with plot twists that an Alger might have envied—that seemed, in fact, almost too good to be true. In those seventy-two hours, the indefatigable Sarnoff had learned that America was the land of golden opportunity only when the opportunity was recognized, and

seized. And that, once one has attained the spotlight and the center of the stage, one must cling to fame for dear life and never let it go.

Rose Pastor Stokes was still trying to cling to her own early fame, and, it began to seem, to cling to her marriage as well. Back in her *Tageblatt* days, Rose Pastor had written of

*Love—
Oh, give me love!
Love—the love that will always prove
The beautiful force that will always move
The life of the beautiful soul I love;
A love that will flow from the heart I call,
A heart from whose generous fountains fall,
A love that is love and true love for all;
But whose love, oh, joy! would be most for me.
Then let fair fame be whatever she be,
I fix my choice most profitably—
On love.*

Among the little homilies contained in her “Ethics of the Dust Pan” column had been, “The crowning glory of a woman’s life is the attainment of love, not the object of it,” and, “The woman’s heart makes the home and the man makes the woman’s heart,” and, “Nothing endears two beings so much to each other as a quarrel.” How, one might ask, was Rose Pastor Stokes’s love life—how was her marriage faring—against the backdrop of all her political activities? There was the increasing evidence that all was not well, and that quarrels were not endearing Rose and Graham Phelps Stokes to each other.

It was noted that, though Graham Stokes remained a member in good standing of the Socialist party, he was seldom seen marching beside his wife in the various strikes and demonstrations in which she so actively participated. Nor did Graham Stokes accompany his wife on her lecture tours as she, Debs, and Elmer Rice sought to spread the socialist doctrine across the country. Anzia Yezierska, a Russian-Jewish writer who knew the

Stokeses, used their story as the basis for a novel, which she called *Salome of the Tenements*.

In the book, the wealthy, Christian character based on Graham Stokes is called John Manning, and the poor Jewish girl, based on Rose, is named Sonya Vrunsky. Here is the way Sonya Vrunsky describes her husband: “The Anglo-Saxon coldness, it’s centuries of solid ice that all the suns of the sky can’t melt.” In an angry moment, Sonya calls her husband an *allrightnik*—that is, a materialist, a person of no sensitivity, and, most of all, a person with neither learning nor spiritual values. Of herself, however, Sonya declares, “I am a Russian Jewess, a flame—a longing. A soul consumed with hunger for heights beyond reach. I am the ache of unvoiced dreams, the clamor of suppressed desires. I am the un-lived lives of generations stifled in Siberian prisons. I am the urge of ages for the free, the beautiful that never yet was on land or sea.”

Whether such exchanges actually took place within the household on Norfolk Street is open to question, but in describing the Stokes marriage Miss Yeziarska wrote that the two were “the oriental and the Anglo-Saxon trying to find a common language. The over-emotional Ghetto struggling for its breath in the thin air of puritan restraint. An East Side savage forced suddenly into the strait-jacket of American civilization. Sonya was like the dynamite bomb and Manning the walls of tradition constantly menaced by threatening explosions.”

That Rose Stokes was indeed a highly emotional woman there can be no doubt. Once, strolling down a pushcart-crowded street, she had seen and spoken to an old woman selling candles from a basket set up on the doorstep of a store. As they were chatting, the man who owned the store appeared at the doorway and kicked the woman’s basket, scattering her candles into the street. At the sight of this gratuitous cruelty, Rose wrote later, “I felt the deep world-sorrow; a flood of feeling overwhelmed me—I burst into tears and cried all the way home. It is a sad world, this; so much pain and sorrow; so much poverty and suffering is the lot of those who are, perhaps, God’s best beloved. And, oh, how it clutches at the heart-strings—the thought that all this pain and misery is man’s through his brother man.” There is evidence that Rose Stokes wept easily. There is also evidence that she had an unusually quick temper.

Anzia Yeziarska, meanwhile, the author of the roman à clef of Rose Stokes's marriage, had herself experienced the plight of her novel's heroine, and Rose's own. Miss Yeziarska, too, had felt herself trapped between two cultures, and had made the mistake of dreaming that some fairy godmother's magic wand—some Prince Charming with a glass slipper—might appear to lift her out of the squalor of the ghetto into the perfumed world of American success. She did not understand—in fact, resented—the hard crash-course in assimilation that the ghetto offered; the ghetto in New York was like a school itself, in which each ill-clad newcomer—or greenhorn, as they were called—was treated like a freshman by upper-classmen, and hazed and taunted unmercifully until he or she adapted to the new rules or found, like David Sarnoff, some avenue of escape. On her first day of school in America, not speaking a word of English, Anzia Yeziarska had found herself in a classroom where all the other students understood what the teacher was saying, and only she did not. Instead of trying to swim with the tide as best she could, as others had done, she was angry and humiliated and dropped out of school. America, she decided, was not as advertised.

To make matters worse, she had to endure an Old World patriarchal father who was a Talmudic scholar and spent his days with phylacteries and holy texts, and who railed at her because she was unmarried: “A woman alone, not a wife and not a mother, has no existence.”

Anzia Yeziarska had arrived in New York from Poland in 1901 at age sixteen, and, after the brief experiment with education, went to work as a housemaid for a wealthy Americanized Jewish family who refused to speak Yiddish with her, even though they spoke and understood it perfectly. After a month of scrubbing floors and doing laundry, she asked for her wages, and was shown the door. Her next job was in a sweatshop, where she attached buttons to blouses from dawn to dusk; when she finally protested the long working hours, she was dismissed. Her third job was in a factory, which at least gave her the luxury of evenings on her own.

After a dozen years in New York, she finally reached the point where she was thinking in English sentences. She began to write short stories, and to submit them to magazines. Her writing was amateurish and overwrought—“Here I am ... lost in chaos, wandering between worlds”—but her theme, the immigrant experience on the Lower East Side, was one that struck some

editors as strong and original, and her stories began to sell. At last, as a woman approaching middle age, she published her first novel on the immigrant theme, called *Hungry Hearts*.

Hungry Hearts earned her some respectful reviews, but very little money—only two hundred dollars in royalties. But then, out of the blue, as James Graham Phelps Stokes had come to Rose Pastor, came Prince Charming in a golden chariot. It was none other than Sam Goldwyn of Hollywood, with an offer of ten thousand dollars for *Hungry Hearts*. Goldwyn, furthermore, wanted her to come to Hollywood to collaborate on the script, offering her a salary of two hundred dollars a week, plus all expenses. At last, the American Dream had landed at her doorstep.

Off she dashed to Hollywood, followed by headlines that read, IMMIGRANT WINS FORTUNE IN MOVIES; SWEATSHOP CINDERELLA AT THE MIRAMAR HOTEL; and FROM HESTER STREET TO HOLLYWOOD. At the Los Angeles railroad station, she was met by Goldwyn's publicity staff, who ushered her, terrified, into her first press conference. Then it was off to parties at the homes of such local luminaries as Will Rogers, Rupert Hughes, Elinor Glyn, Gertrude Atherton, and Alice Duer Miller. Paul Bern, who would later marry Jean Harlow, was assigned to direct *Hungry Hearts*, and her first illusion was shattered when she was told that her novel, intended as a heart-wrenching tragedy of poverty and despair, needed "laughs and a happy ending" to turn it into a successful motion picture. When she protested this butchery of her idea, she was told, "Screaming and yelling won't help. You've signed the contract that they can adapt the story as they think best. You were lucky that they used as much of your story as they did." She was shocked to meet a seasoned Hollywood writer who told her glibly that all the studio had used of his last story was the title. He told her that he was planning to change the title and sell the story again. Anzia Yezierska was given a large office at the studio, a big desk, and a secretary, and was told, "Write!" She found that she could not write a single word.

On the first day of shooting, Sam Goldwyn himself came on the set and sat down beside her. What was she working on now, he wanted to know. She explained that, so far, all she had come up with was the title for a new novel: it was to be called *Children of Loneliness*. Intrigued, Goldwyn asked Miss Yezierska to join him for lunch. She did not realize that this was an honor bestowed only on a very select few until, when the lunch was over, a

number of very important people in the production, who had ignored Miss Yeziarska up to then, suddenly seemed most eager to get to know her.

But the lunch with Goldwyn had not gone well.

“What’s your new story about?” he asked her.

She replied that she had only written a few fragments of scenes, and could not really talk about the story until she got to the end.

“I don’t know much about literature,” Goldwyn said. “But I do know that the plot of a good story can be summed up in a sentence, and you must know the end of the plot before you begin.”

Feeling helpless, Miss Yeziarska replied that she didn’t work this way. “My characters spin their own plots,” she told him.

“But what’s the plot,” he insisted, “the suspense?”

“Suspense?” she said. “What greater suspense is there than the mystery of a guilty conscience?”

Miss Yeziarska noticed the great producer’s eyes beginning to look somewhat glazed. “Well, get to the point. What’s the plot?” he repeated.

“The plot is the expiation of guilt,” she said.

Now Goldwyn was looking as though his lunch was not agreeing with him, and Miss Yeziarska then launched into a long, autobiographical jeremiad: “I had to break away from my mother’s cursing and my father’s preaching to live my life; but without them I had no life. When you deny your parents, you deny the ground under your feet, the sky over your head. You become an outlaw, a pariah...” The more she talked, the more Sam Goldwyn’s apparent gastric disorder seemed to increase, and the more animated she became: “They mourned me as if I were dead. I am like Cain, forever bound to the brother he slew with his hate...”

Mr. Goldwyn at that point remembered a pressing appointment, placed his napkin beside his plate, and excused himself. He had decided he was dealing with a madwoman.

And yet, because of all the publicity that had surrounded Anzia Yeziarska’s arrival in the movie capital, she was still regarded as a hot property in Hollywood. She was told that she had “a credit face”—that is, that she looked honest, that she had the kind of face that someone would extend credit to. Though she had written nothing at all since her arrival, William Fox of Fox Pictures approached her with a scheme to steal her away from Goldwyn, offering her an escalating contract to write for him—

twenty thousand dollars for the first year, thirty thousand for the second year, and fifty thousand for the third. It was the kind of Hollywood contract that most film writers would have committed mayhem for. But, feeling bewildered, confused, totally out of her element, and beset by agonizing self-doubt—convinced that she could never produce anything worthy of such an imposing salary—she hesitated. She could not adjust to Hollywood’s cynicism. She believed that she wrote from inspiration, and her muse had abandoned her. She was suffering from what today would be described as acute culture shock. In the end, she returned the Fox contract unsigned. “Who do you think you are?” William Fox asked her. “Joan of Arc, waiting for the voices?” She left Hollywood, never to return, and went back to New York and poverty.

Her next novel, *Salome of the Tenements*, fared commercially no better than her first. It was not bought for the movies. *Hungry Hearts*, as a film, did not do well at the box office. She was already a defeated woman. To her parents, she was a failure for not having married and had children. Later, as the Great Depression settled across the country, Miss Yeziarska was able to find work with the WPA Writers’ Project, where, to earn her paycheck, she was forced to grind out a prescribed number of words a day on a tourists’ guidebook to New York City.

The story of Rose Pastor Stokes would end on a not much greater note of triumph. As World War I spread across the face of Europe, drawing the United States inexorably into the conflict—while President Wilson vacillated—Rose remained active, touring, joining picket lines, and making speeches for the cause of socialism. Until the early summer of 1917, Rose and her husband appeared to present a united front politically, but then the first signs of dissension were noted. This occurred after the Socialist party had officially denounced Wilson’s war programs, when he had finally declared war on Germany in April of that year. Graham Stokes, who disapproved of the party’s antiwar stand, announced that he was quitting to join the army. This was followed by an announcement from Rose that she was also quitting.

But then, a few weeks later, she changed her mind, and announced that she was rejoining the Socialists. Within days, she was back in the political fray, attending Socialist meetings and rallies, chaining herself with handcuffs to striking workers. Late in 1917, she appeared to support a strike

in the garment district, marching and chanting with the strikers. All at once, dozens of policemen descended, brandishing nightsticks. There were shouts, screams, and much general confusion at the confrontation, and then the policemen rushed the picket line, swinging. One of the striking women had been leading her small son by the hand. She was pushed aside, and a policeman began clubbing the child. Rose Stokes ran to protect the boy, and to throw her body across his. She was clubbed unconscious. It was the first of several brutal police beatings she would receive over the next ten years.

That was bad enough, but by 1919 Rose Pastor Stokes was in even deeper trouble. It was her fiery Russian style, as much as anything else, that lay at the heart of most of her difficulties. But there was a new spirit abroad in the land that also had to be taken into account. No sooner was the First World War over than there were outbursts of violence throughout the United States. It was a phenomenon that has been noted by historians and philosophers: in the wake of a great national conflict, with peace restored, a nation—its adrenaline level still high—frequently turns its feverish energy to identifying and unearthing enemies at home. The Versailles peace treaty was signed in June of 1919, but it seemed that civilian furies could not be demobilized as quickly as a platoon, and 1919 became the year of the zealot, an era of revenge against domestic foes, real or imagined. The Hun had been brought to his knees, but now it seemed that there were other heads to be bloodied.

In 1919, the anarchists Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were released from prison, and then deported, along with more than two hundred other “traitors,” to Soviet Russia. An additional 249 Russian “undesirables” were shipped out aboard the S.S. *Buford*. A young special assistant to Attorney General Alexander Palmer was twenty-four-year-old John Edgar Hoover, whose job it was to handle deportation cases involving alleged Communist revolutionaries, and who would help Palmer organize federal raids on Communist party offices throughout the United States. In a New York post office, just before May Day, sixteen bombs were found addressed to prominent Americans, including John D. Rockefeller and Attorney General Palmer. Who was responsible for these was unclear, since America’s list of enemies at home was growing—black anarchists, Red terrorists, the Jews, the Yellow Peril, the Roman Catholics, who, it was said, were conspiring to turn the country over to “Black Papism” and even to

establish the pope in America. The Italians, too, were considered a dangerous element, and the groundwork was being set for the trial of two Italian-born anarchists named Sacco and Vanzetti, who would be executed for the alleged murder of a paymaster in South Braintree, Massachusetts.

May Day parades were broken up by the police. In the summer of 1919, race riots broke out in twenty-six American cities. On July 19, white soldiers in Washington, D.C., led a raid on the capital's black ghetto sections. On July 27, Chicago exploded when a disagreement at a Lake Michigan beach led to an armed foray into the city's Black Belt, at the end of which fifteen whites and twenty-three blacks lay dead, with hundreds of others seriously injured.

On the labor front, it was a year of chaos, with, all told, more than four million Americans either on strike or locked out. On September 9, the police of Boston went on strike, and Governor Calvin Coolidge reacted by ordering the Massachusetts State Militia into Boston, and firing all 1, 117 of the striking officers. On September 22, steelworkers at the Gary, Indiana, plant of United States Steel went on strike. The steel strike lasted 110 days, and ended with none of the workers' demands met.

The blacks, Catholics, Orientals, and Jews aside, it was apparent to most right-thinking and red-blooded Americans where the blame for all this unrest and mischief lay—on Communist Russia, the Bolsheviks. Everyone knew that the Bolsheviks had a long-range plan to take over the world and subject it to communism, and that free America was one of communism's principal targets. All at once, in 1919, the proliferation of strikes against American industry provided all the evidence that was needed that a Communist takeover was indeed at hand. In state capitals across the country, laws were passed against "seditious speech," and thousands were arrested and jailed for this offense, including a Socialist congressman from Milwaukee who was sentenced to twenty years in prison. In the state of Washington, the newly formed American Legion raided the headquarters of the International Workers of the World, and was roundly praised for this all-American action.

Each strike and riot of that year sparked a new Red Scare. Hundreds of people suspected of harboring Red sympathies were arrested, thrown into jail, and had their property confiscated. Informers abounded, ready with lists of Known Reds and Suspected Reds, on which they placed the names

of all the people they didn't like. Innocent gatherings to hear lectures were translated as cell meetings. Because of a pointed finger and a cry of "Red!" a job could be lost and a reputation ruined. And if an employer could claim—and it was the easiest thing to do—that his employees' strike was "Red led" or "Red inspired," patriotism came to the fore, and the police could be brought in to break it up with fists and clubs and pistols.

Of course, this is not to deny that a number of strikes *were* Communist led and Communist inspired.

From the time of America's entry into the war, meanwhile, the American Socialist party had been deeply divided between prowar and antiwar factions and, more important, between a moderate right wing and a radical left. The split had become formalized in 1919 when the Third International was founded in Moscow, dedicated to propagating the Communist doctrine throughout the world, and with the stated purpose of producing a worldwide revolution, with the Comintern vowing to unite all Communist groups on a global scale. During the war, Rose Stokes had aligned herself with the left-wing Socialists. But by 1919, with the split complete, Rose stopped calling herself a Socialist, and declared herself a Communist, helping to found the American Communist party. She quickly became a member of its Central Executive Committee.

Her trouble, however, had begun the previous year. It had all started innocently enough, in the early spring of 1918, when she was invited to speak before the Woman's Dining Club of Kansas City, Missouri, on March 16. By now, most of Rose's lecture audiences regarded her as more of a national curiosity and celebrity than as a political force—a poor Jewish girl who had married a prominent Christian, a woman who, despite the wealth and luxuries capitalist America had given her, still remained an avowed foe of capitalism. In responding to the Woman's Dining Club invitation, Rose advised that she would be happy to accept, but warned that if she spoke she would speak "as a Socialist." The club's board of directors met to discuss this matter, and at least two members—notably Mrs. Maude B. Flowers and Mrs. Florence E. Gebhardt—vociferously opposed putting Rose on the program. America had been in the war with Germany for less than a year, and socialism smacked of anti-Americanism. But these ladies were in the minority, and Rose's terms were accepted. She arrived in Kansas City on

the appointed date, and held forth on the dais for about an hour and a half, including a question period.

She spoke, as she always did, extemporaneously, and in those days before tape recorders, one of the problems would be that no one who attended that meeting, including the lecturer herself, would ever be able to reconstruct verbatim just what Rose Pastor Stokes had said to the ladies of Kansas City. As in any audience, different people remembered different things, but there was no question that certain people found some of her remarks offensive. Some heard her say that she opposed the American war effort. Others inferred that she also opposed the drafting of young men into the United States Army. A reporter from the *Kansas City Star*, who had attended the meeting, had his own version of what had happened, which was published the following Monday, March 18:

So she's back in socialism. Mrs. Stokes [is] for the government and anti-war at the same time. Mrs. Rose Pastor Stokes, whose address before the Business Woman's Dining Club Saturday night was characterized by a navy officer as disloyal and anarchistic, denied both charges today.

"As to my being 'terribly in favor of anarchy,'" she said, "I only wish Emma Goldman could hear that. How many, many times I have disputed that subject with her. I don't think that charge needs any further notice.

"As to the other things which have been published about the address Saturday night, even those who may have disagreed received it in a spirit of fairness and without any manifestation of disapproval. If there had been anything in it to warrant harsh criticisms, it seems strange that five hundred persons could have heard it through in such a spirit."

Mrs. Stokes said today that in the Saturday night address she emphasized the fact that America was forced into the war.

"Briefly," she said, "my statement was that while a very small minority of persons in America are in the war to make the world safe for capitalism, the overwhelming number of persons are in it to make the world safe for democracy. And that, ultimately, is the most significant issue of the great conflict."

Mrs. Stokes said today that she resigned from the Socialist party when the United States entered the war, because she disapproved of the anti-war platform of the party adopted at St. Louis, but a few weeks ago became a member again having decided the St. Louis platform, in the main, was right.

“I do not oppose the war, or its prosecution, in any sense,” she said. “I can see, at present, no way in which it can end except by the defeat of Germany. I believe the government of the United States should have the unqualified support of every citizen in its war aims. My misgivings are that, whatever the outcome of the war, the capitalistic interests of the world may use it to further their commercial exploitations of undeveloped and under-developed countries.”

Certainly the *Star* reporter had got her to say a number of contradictory things—that she was both for the war and against it—with the result that the reader might conclude that she was a very confused woman. All might yet have been well, however, if Rose Stokes had been content to let the matter go at that. But she was not, and, carrying things farther, dashed off a letter to the managing editor of the *Star*, further clarifying her position, which was received the following afternoon, March 19:

To the Star:

I see that it is, after all, necessary to send a statement for publication over my own signature, and I trust that you will give it space in your columns.

A headline in this evening’s issue of the *Star* reads: “Mrs Stokes for Government and Against War at the Same Time.” I am *not* for the government. In the interview that follows I am quoted as having said, “I believe the government of the United States should have the unqualified support of every citizen in its war aims.”

I made no such statement, and I believe no such thing. No government which is *for* the profiteers can also be for the people, and I am *for* the people, while the government is for the profiteers.

I expect my working class point of view to receive no sympathy from your paper, but I do expect that the traditional courtesy of

publication by the newspapers of a signed statement of correction, which even our most Bourbon papers grant, will be extended to this statement by yours.

Yours truly,
Rose Pastor Stokes

The managing editor of the *Star*, one Mr. Stout, ran the Stokes letter the following morning, March 20. He also sent a copy of it to the office of the United States district attorney because, as he put it later, "I felt it was a matter the government should have."

On June 15, 1917, the Congress of the United States had passed an act known as the Espionage Law. Based on the statements in her letter to the editor, and the fact that the *Star* had a circulation of 440,000, and was read by servicemen stationed in nearby military camps and cantonments who might presumably be subverted by Mrs. Stokes's views, Rose Pastor Stokes was promptly arrested and charged with three counts of sedition under Section 3, Title I, of the Espionage Law. Specifically, it was charged that she "did unlawfully, wilfully, knowingly and feloniously at Kansas City ... attempt to cause insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny and refusal of duty in the military and naval forces of the United States, in that she did, then and there prepare, publish and cause to be printed, published, distributed, circulated and conveyed in and by means of a certain newspaper ... a certain communication," and so on. When the dismaying news reached Graham Stokes in New York, he hurried to his wife's side in Missouri, where she had been continuing her lecture tour.

In the trial that followed, two of the government's most important witnesses were the ladies of the Dining Club who had been most opposed to inviting Rose Stokes as a speaker. The more hostile of the two was Maude Flowers. Mrs. Flowers was asked by the prosecution to recall what Mrs. Stokes had said at the March 16 meeting, and she was quite specific:

She said that no thinking or well-informed person really believed that we were in this war for the sake of world democracy; that if we were sincere in our belief we would have entered the war when the neutrality of Belgium was violated, and we would most certainly have

gone in when the Lusitania was sunk, but we did not enter the war until the U-boat became a menace to world trade, and threatened to isolate the Allies and threatened to cut off the munitions and our over-production that we sent to the Allies, and to threaten the vast loans the capitalists had already made to the Allies.

She said our men were in this war for what they believed was world freedom or world democracy; that in order to send our men, American men, into battle, they must have a principle to fight for, an ideal, and the capitalists and profiteers knew this and for this purpose the phrase was coined, "The world must be made safe for democracy." She said further that while our men entered the war in this belief, that they would become undeceived finally and that when they returned to this country it would be with a different belief and they would never take up life again on the old system. She said they would learn while they were abroad that they were not fighting for democracy but for the protection and safeguarding of Morgan's millions. That when they came back, or perhaps before, this country would be plunged into a revolution that had been for a long time pending, that we had been drifting towards an industrial revolution for a long time and this would most certainly bring it about.

She said further that the activities of the Red Cross, the activities of the Food and Fuel Administration and other war-created activities, were mere war camouflage. That is all, I believe, she said as directly bearing on the war.

Mrs. Flowers had brought along a friend, Miss Gertrude Hamilton, to attend the Stokes lecture, and Miss Hamilton was also called as a witness for the prosecution. Miss Hamilton repeated essentially what Mrs. Flowers had told the court, but added one small detail that was new. Miss Hamilton was certain that Rose Stokes had mentioned a poem that she had written, but that Miss Hamilton was quite sure Rose had not read to her audience, in which she had said that she was "thrilled by the sight of soldiers marching down the street." But now, Rose had said, after second thoughts, she regretted having written the poem and that "if she had the power to recall the poem she would do so."

Graham Stokes hired two prominent Kansas City attorneys, Seymour Stedman and Harry Sullivan, to handle his wife's defense in the case of *United States of America v. Rose Pastor Stokes*. Most of the trial work was done by Mr. Stedman. When Mrs. Florence Gebhardt was called to the witness stand for the prosecution, it began to seem as though she had heard an entirely different speech. Instead of a lecture that was anticapitalist, Mrs. Gebhardt had come away from the event convinced that she had heard a lecture that was pro-Russian. Asked to describe the talk, Mrs. Gebhardt stated:

She said that in Russia everything was free, that the land there being occupied was divided and the people were going to live on it as long as they wished, or could move off whenever they were ready; that the vaults and the banks were being broken into and the contents divided among the people to whom they rightfully belonged.

THE PROSECUTION: Did she say whether or not she approved of that?

There was an objection to the question from Mr. Stedman, which was overruled, and Mrs. Gebhardt was directed by the court to answer.

MRS. GEBHARDT: From her remarks I would say she approved of that.

All told, eleven witnesses were called for the government's side of the case, and following Mrs. Gebhardt's testimony the prosecution concentrated on what the witnesses thought the defendant had had to say, or felt, about Russia. Another Dining Club member, for example, Mrs. Margaret DeWitt, testified, somewhat ramblingly, that:

She spoke of the Bolsheviks as having taken possession of the land and of the country and of having taken possession of the money in Russia, and having taken possession of the land and allowing the principal land holder his fair ratio such as he could till, and that the rest of the land would be divided up among the Russian people, or among the people. And that theirs was an ideal government, that theirs was a

true democracy and a pure democracy, and that they offered to the world this idea....

I then asked a question. I asked why, if Russia were in this condition, and that she had come to this country and had profited by its institutions and developed here, why she did not return to Russia and give Russia the benefit of that—of her training. That was the time she mentioned the President. She said the President would not permit her. She said Emma Goldman had made that effort, but was not permitted, but she said, “I hope you do not class me with her.”

The next witness was male, Mr. C. M. Adams, the husband of a Dining Club member, and his impression of the evening was not that Rose Stokes had wanted to disassociate herself from Emma Goldman, but that she had identified herself strongly with, and actually extolled, the famous anarchist. Said Mr. Adams, “Well, she mentioned about Emma Goldman being one of the greatest shining lights in her belief and only wished that she could express herself along the lines in as good fashion as she did.”

The government had decided that its case would be given greater weight if an actual serviceman could be found who would testify on how Mrs. Stokes’s remarks had affected him. Army Lieutenant Ralph B. Campbell, it seemed, had attended the lecture, and in his testimony he brought up the matter of the poem, which he insisted that Rose had actually read to her audience, thereby contradicting the earlier testimony of Miss Hamilton. Furthermore, Lieutenant Campbell stated, there had been a burst of applause after Rose Stokes read her poem, but that the defendant had “raised her hand to check the applause,” indicating that she no longer agreed with the poem’s patriotic sentiments. There was no testimony to corroborate this.

In his cross-examination of Lieutenant Campbell, Mr. Stedman tried to make order out of the confusion of exactly what the defendant had said, or had not said, on that fateful evening at the Woman’s Dining Club of Kansas City.

MR. STEDMAN: I wish you would start out at the beginning of the address and state as much as you remember.

LT. CAMPBELL: Mrs. Stokes started her address with a resumé of industrial life of the world—

STEDMAN: Pardon me, state what she said. You are now giving your conclusions.

THE PROSECUTION: Oh no, he's not! He is stating the substance of what she said. Do you want him to use the exact words she stated?

STEDMAN: He stated the "resumé" and I assume it is a conclusion.

THE COURT: Well, of course, Lieutenant Campbell, you may state as far as you can the substance of what she stated there. The court doesn't understand by that, that counsel requires the explicit repetition of a long speech, but the substance of the various topics considered and what the subject matter was and her expressions relating to it.

LT. CAMPBELL: She mentioned the working conditions beginning with practically a written history; discussed the ancient guild system of workers—

STEDMAN (interrupting): That is not what I am asking for.

THE PROSECUTION: Yes it is.

THE COURT: Are you asking him to attempt to repeat the speech as near as he can verbatim?

STEDMAN: No. No man living could probably do that.... In substance what I am asking for is the language and not conclusions.

THE COURT: You may ask him for anything you see fit as near as he can recall. We are not going to take up time here to have an hour's speech recited by the witness.

STEDMAN: I am not trying to quarrel with Your Honor....

THE COURT: Very well. You are at liberty to ask him about any portion of the speech you desire.

STEDMAN: I understand the court's ruling on this to be then that I cannot ask this witness the substance of that address?

THE COURT: I said that you could ask the substance of it but not to the extent of having him practically repeat in substance the entire speech which would amount even though not verbatim to something like an hour or more.

Throughout this interchange, the prosecution, in the person of the United States district attorney, remained silent, allowing Mr. Stedman and the judge to become further at loggerheads, and to work each other into the position of adversaries. Mr. Stedman seems to have been principally interested in “language”—as much direct quotation from the Stokes speech as the witness could remember—and the judge seems to have taken the position that this was asking the impossible. Meanwhile, it had probably begun to be clear to Stedman that no actual language would be forthcoming from Lieutenant Campbell. Mr. Stedman stepped away from the bench, saying, “Very well, to that I wish to take an exception and I do not care to cross-examine the witness any further.”

All this testimony and cross-examination was very curious because, supposedly, the government’s case against Rose Stokes was to be built upon the letter she had written and caused to be published in the *Star* on March 20, and not on the speech she had given to the Dining Club on March 16, about the content of which no two members of the audience seemed able to agree anyway. Still, there was one final, hostile witness from the Dining Club audience, Mrs. Eva J. Sullivan. Mrs. Sullivan testified that just before Mrs. Stokes had been introduced, the club’s president had handed the defendant “a piece of paper”—presumably the check for her honorarium—saying, “I will have to take care of this, because it is your money,” to which Mrs. Stokes had replied, “You may not want to give it to me after you have heard my talk.” Mrs. Sullivan went on to say that the tenor of the talk had been that there were two classes of people who were interested in the war—one class for democracy, and the other for profit, and that the defendant had made the statement that she was “afraid the profiteers were getting control, and misleading the others.”

As the trial progressed, it seemed to get farther and farther afield from the “wilful, felonious” act Mrs. Stokes had been charged with committing: writing the letter. Next, the prosecution brought in a witness to testify about an entirely different Stokes lecture, which she had delivered four days after the Dining Club talk, hundreds of miles away in the little town of Neosho, Missouri, in the southwestern corner of the state. Of what he could recall of this second lecture date on her Missouri tour, Mr. Frank D. Marlow said:

She said that the government at Washington was controlled absolutely by the moneyed class; that she believed that President Wilson was honest and sincere; that he was helpless for the reason that the government was controlled by the profiteers or the moneyed class. She said that she couldn't sanction and endorse the war because it was a war for the profiteer. She said that freedom of the seas meant freedom for the millionaires and she pointed to herself as one of those millionaires. She said that she couldn't advise nor urge men to fight in this war for the reason that it was a war for the profiteers.

All sorts of testimony was heard in the trial that probably would not be judged permissible in a court of law today. For example, one of Rose Stokes's arresting officers, Chief Deputy United States Marshal James N. Purcell, was allowed—over objections from the defense table—to describe his conversations with the defendant immediately after her arrest, when she would have been far wiser to have curbed her natural loquacity. She had told him, said Officer Purcell, that the United States government was controlled by the profiteers; that the war was between the capitalist classes on both sides, and that therefore it made no difference which side won as far as working people were concerned. She said that if Germany's winning the war would improve American working conditions, then she was all for Germany. As for what was going on in Russia, she said that the press accounts were not true, but were “censored to suit the people,” as the vested interests in the Allied powers wanted them to be censored.

Shackled to the wrist of Officer S. W. Dillingham of the Justice Department's Bureau of Investigation, another of the arresting officers who was allowed to testify, she was as voluble as ever, and allegedly told him that she hoped that *both* Germany and the Allies would be defeated. The only victory she wanted to see was for the working classes. Mr. Dillingham said that he asked her, “Is it your point to cause a revolution in this country, as in Russia?” She replied, “Yes.”

On March 29, while awaiting her arraignment, Rose Stokes was allowed to grant an interview to Mr. P. S. Dee, a reporter from the *Kansas City Post*. His testimony was that Mrs. Stokes had told him that the country had gone “war crazy,” that “profiteers were getting such a strong hold on the

government that after the war it would be absolutely impossible to jar them loose,” and that she “feared for the working class, whose conditions were already so bad.”

Only briefly did her letter to the *Star*, which constituted the entire basis of the prosecution, come into the proceedings. When the paper’s managing editor, Mrs. Stout, was cross-examined, Mr. Stedman tried to shift some of the blame onto Stout for publishing the seditious material, while at the same time turning it over to federal authorities. There was the following exchange:

STEDMAN: Did you think its [the letter’s] possible effect was a violation of the Espionage Law?

STOUT: I was not familiar with the legal aspect, the technical aspect, but it seemed to me it was a subject the government should have.

STEDMAN: Did you think it might possibly create insubordination?

STOUT: I did not reason about it to that extent.

STEDMAN: Did you think that it was seditious?

STOUT: I thought it was disloyal.

STEDMAN: You thought it was disloyal?

STOUT: Yes....

STEDMAN: You thought it was disloyal and you sent 440,000 copies to people who read your paper, did you?

STOUT: Yes.

One of the few members of the Dining Club who took the witness stand in Rose Stokes’s defense was Mrs. Annette Moore, the club’s president, who, after all, had engaged Rose as a speaker. Mrs. Moore said:

Her subject was “After the War, What?” and was purely problematical and apprehensive in every regard. Her whole thought seemed to be for the working class, and seemed to be that if—she precluded [*sic*] every remark with “if”—and if such and such were the fact, if the profiteers were permitted to charge such extortionate prices, such prices as the world had never known before, that in that event that when the boys came home from the trenches and found the democracy

they had been fighting for had not been won, then we should have a social revolution in this country....

She said as she saw these boys marching down Fifth Avenue, that she was thrilled at the sight of them, and she said that she was inspired to write this poem, and I believe—I am not quite certain on that point, but I believe she said that if the boys had not been fighting for democracy, and did not get what they had gone to fight for, that she would feel like recalling that statement.

Mrs. Moore's testimony was not exactly a powerful defense, but at least she did not mention anything about an endorsement of the Bolsheviks, which had seemed to obsess so many of the other witnesses.

Rose Stokes then took the stand on her own behalf. Once more, the subject was her remarks to the Dining Club, and not her letter to the editor, which was at issue. She began by stating at the outset that she had made no mention of the Red Cross on the evening of March 16, 1918. She then offered a summary of her lecture. Her summary was very long—too long, perhaps, because Rose was a woman who, given an audience to listen, always rose to the occasion—and the prosecution made no effort to interrupt her. This was what she told the judge and jury:

Now I said the war, at the bottom, was economic.... And I said that the United States, as other governments, had entered the war from vital pressures of vital interests; that no government ever declares war for purely idealistic reasons....

I further said ... that peoples have to have an ideal, that peoples on the contrary always went to war because of an ideal, and that therefore, if the people would fight at all, they must be stirred in their idealistic natures. Their hearts, their minds, are simple, pure, clean, and they desire to fight only for the highest things; and that when President Wilson uttered the great watchword of democracy, "We will make the world safe for democracy," the people arose to answer that call. And I said, "Can you imagine the people, who would die fighting for an ideal, fighting for purely economic reasons? Can you imagine the people fighting for such a thing as Morgan's dollars?" I said that when

men fight they answer a great call, and that we could not get a baker's dozen, that is the very phrase I used, that we could not get a baker's dozen, if we had called out, "Come on, and fight," for instance, "for Morgan's dollars."

I said I had two brothers in the service, one in the army and one in the navy. I had persuaded my good mother, who hates war and who is so much opposed to killing that she would not have her boy go into the army, but he was eager to go and I wanted him to go, and I persuaded her and it took me a long time to persuade her, and finally she let him enter the navy and he is there now.

I said I was not opposed to the war; the war was upon us, it was here, we could not stop it....

I never said our men were befooled. I said our men answered the call of democracy, believing they were fighting for democracy, and when they came home, when—if they found the things they fought for were not gained, that undoubtedly we should have both an industrial and social revolution in this country....

I asked for questions and for a while we discussed further these matters and one question that was asked me was this: "Do I approve of the social revolution in Russia?" I said I approved of the ideal for which Russia was striving, and I approved thoroughly of the ideals of the Bolsheviki, the ideals they were striving for; that I knew them to be honest, sincere socialists who were working in the interests of the people; that they were socializing land and industry in Russia as fast as these could be socialized, and naturally there is always in great changes—great political, social or economic changes—some distress, just as there is in so-called peaceful times elsewhere; but that the newspapers, through the strict censorship, had not given us the truth about Russia, and I had reasons to believe through sources of information that I had, coming through such men as Colonel Thompson of the Red Cross, recently returned from Russia, and men like Lincoln Steffens, recently returned from Russia—that what I had learned from them gave me a different impression, and that President Wilson himself had heartily supported the ideas and aims of the Russian revolution.

Then, the question was asked me—the next question came from the same questioner, and that was: Did I approve of the taking from the banks the money of Russia? I said I did not know how much truth there was in this confiscation of wealth in Russia, but if they felt it necessary to take over wealth just as here, when we take over great aggregations of wealth for the common good—that if the people of Russia desired it, that perhaps it was right for them to do it and I would approve of it, if I felt it was in the interests of the whole people to socialize wealth.

Another question was put to me: why I did not go back to Russia if I felt that conditions were not quite just here—and it was put indirectly. The question was asked, why don't those who have developed power and gained comforts and wealth here, who were not born in this country, why, if they do not like certain institutions and are criticising [*sic*] certain institutions, why don't they return to their own countries? Why not go back to Russia? And I arose to reply, and I said, "I presume, Madam, that you refer to me when you say that?" I said I was indeed very eager to go to Russia when the revolution took place because I did want to be helpful, and I had asked to go over, but that I was not permitted. And I instanced Emma Goldman, the case of Emma Goldman and Mr. Berkman, when they were first arrested and charged with certain violations of the law. This was before the last revolution in Russia. They were threatened by the authorities, as reported in our press, that they would be deported to Russia. This was before the revolution at all; this was before the czar had been deposed. They were threatened with deportation, and when later they were about to be tried and the revolution had occurred, they asked to be sent back—they asked to be deported to Russia, but the authorities, such was the report, refused to permit them to return.*

And I said further that I should answer still another part of my question. This was after I had seated myself and had recalled that the question was two-sided. I said you refer to me and ask why I, who have developed in this country and have grown up here to wealth and power and intelligence, why I should criticise—why I do not go back? Well, I will tell you why I criticise our institutions and perhaps you will feel that I have some—there is some justice in my criticism of

these institutions. I told her that I came here when I was eleven years of age, that I still wanted to go to school but instead I was put into a factory, that my father worked very hard and yet did not earn enough to meet the needs of his growing family, that I was the oldest of seven children. I was ten years old when the next oldest came, that the other six as they grew were all little ones, that as I became grown up the great part of the burden of supporting the family fell upon me. I said for ten years I have worked and produced things useful and necessary for the people of this country, and all those years I was half starved, I never had enough to eat, I never had a decent bed to sleep in, I sometimes slept on the floor. I was half naked; in the winter I never had a warm coat, I could not afford it. In the summer I never had a vacation, I could not afford it. For twelve years, day in and day out, for six days in the week and sometimes seven, and sometimes the whole season at a time, I worked at night in order to help out the family existence. I worked at doing useful work and never had enough. But the moment I left the useful producing class, the moment I became a part of the capitalistic class which did not have to do any productive work in order to exist, I had all the leisure I wanted, all the vacations I wanted, all the clothes I wanted—everything I wanted was mine without having to do any labor in return for all I have received. And I said, “Madam, do you think that conditions which can produce such an example as I now recite to you are conditions that are not worthy of criticism? Do you think that such conditions are just?” And she replied and shook her head and said, “No.”

There were several odd points in her testimony that may have set the judge and jury wondering. Her charge of censorship in the press was of course offered without proof, and it was ironic that at the heart of the case were statements of her own that had been published, and perhaps *ought* to have been censored. And what had she meant by saying that in America it was often necessary to “take over great aggregations of wealth for the common good”? She may have been referring to income taxes, but it sounded rather threatening. And of course on at least one point she contradicted herself. She had started out by saying that she had not

mentioned the Red Cross in her talk, but then said that the Red Cross had been mentioned, at least in passing.

On cross-examination, the government prosecutor asked her one question: What was her object in arranging a series of lectures to talk about the war? She replied: “My object was to bring the people to a realization that unless we who are left at home fight for democracy where we are, the boys in the trenches may perhaps come home and find they had not gained what they wanted. I believed that in going through that tour, stirring up people to consider the questions of democracy, we were doing our part to fight for the very things our boys have gone over to fight for.”

With that, the defense rested its case.

The judge then turned to instruct the jury. His instruction was rambling, verbose, full of digressions, and consumed some twelve thousand words of court transcript, during the course of which there was much flag-waving and many appeals to red-blooded American patriotism. He began by reviewing the three counts of sedition with which Rose had been charged: attempting “to cause insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny and refusal of duty in the military and naval forces of the United States”; trying to “obstruct the recruiting and enlistment service of the United States”; and conveying “false reports and false statements with intent to interfere with the operation and success of the military.”

The “false reports,” of course, consisted of her letter to the *Star*. The court reminded the jury that the *Star*’s 440,000 papers in daily circulation not only went to thousands of Kansas City servicemen stationed at home and abroad, but was also going to young men of enlistment and conscription age—all men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five—as well as to younger men who would soon be of enlistment age. Furthermore, the newspaper circulated to the “mothers, fathers, wives, sisters, brothers, sweethearts, and friends of these men.” The aggregate total of people who could be perverted by Rose Stokes’s words he seemed to imply, was staggering. Multiply this by the mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters of the sweethearts and friends, and it was easy to see how Rose’s thoughts could cause widespread insurrection across the face of the American continent. The court noted that an attempt had been made, during the trial, to show that the *Star*’s editor was equally culpable of printing the disloyal letter. This, however, the court forgave, reminding the jury that Rose had implored

the editor to publish the letter, and that therefore the editor was simply being a gentleman by doing something that a lady asked. He added that, “People who ... seek to promulgate their views through the press do so generally for the purpose of securing wide circulation and, if possible, adoption of those views”—no matter how dangerous or un-American those viewers might be.

The court embarked upon a long digression on the subject of Great Britain, and its treatment of its colonies, to which there had been a reference “in a rather slighting way.” England, the court reminded the jury, was one of America’s allies. So were France and Italy. England’s colonies—Canada, Australia, New Zealand—though under no obligation to do so, had all rallied to the cause of the Mother Country and sent volunteers to aid England in its hour of conflict. English was the official language of America, yet the defendant had spoken slightly of England. “Anything,” the court said, “which leads to a lack of cooperation, anything which in any sense and from any source weakens the manpower and fighting power of that Ally, is a blow at ourselves, and to the success of our common venture.”

The court then got to what it felt was the heart of the matter: the defendant’s pro-Russian sentiments. “The present Bolshevik government, if it can be called a government,” said the court, “is characterized by the defendant as ideal.” The United States, on the other hand, had been characterized as a capitalistic system that oppressed the poor and enriched the middle and upper classes. “This would include,” said the court, “all who, by industry and prudence, have made accumulation and provision for the future. The classes referred to embrace not only those of large wealth but those of modest fortune as well.” In Russia, “the workers, so-called, are permitted arbitrarily to seize and divide up the land and wealth of the country, irrespective of former ownership. If such a system were to be applied to this country, not only the so-called rich, but the small land holder, and the small merchants would be called upon to divide their holdings on a per capita or similar basis. Such are the views of this defendant.” One can only imagine that the conservative Middle Western burghers of Kansas City who comprised the jury were stabbed by fear at these dark words. Did America want its “banks and vaults broken into and the money divided among the people”?

American democracy, the court said, might not be perfect, but it was close to it, and agencies of the United States government were already hard at work on programs to improve the conditions of the poor. Now America was at war, and it was a time for Americans to present a united front to support that war. "Individualism must be put aside for the moment in this country," the court concluded. "We must now stand shoulder to shoulder ... and that is true whatever may be her [the defendant's] opinion about different things, that may be settled here in times of peace and within our own domestic borders. Now the hand of that sort of criticism, and the tongue of that sort of criticism must be stayed until peace is restored and we can work these things out together, as we have always worked out problems here at home."

In short, the court appeared to be asking the jury to return a verdict of guilty.

And that was precisely what it did. The jury was out only twenty minutes before coming back with a verdict that found Rose Pastor Stokes guilty as charged on all three counts.

The judge then pronounced his sentence. The defendant was to pay the costs of the prosecution, and to be imprisoned at the Missouri State Penitentiary for ten years on each of the three counts. The only leniency provided was that the three ten-year terms could be served concurrently.

It began to seem as though the first Jewish woman in the *Social Register*, who may also have been the first Communist in the *Social Register*, might also be one of the first *Social Register* listees to go to jail.

In their eighty-nine-page brief for Rose Stokes's appeal, her attorneys were thorough, coolheaded, occasionally witty, and at all times incredulous about the way her trial had been handled. Messrs. Stedman and Sullivan claimed a total of 137 errors, which they proceeded to describe. The lawyers objected to the admission of unrelated testimony about Rose's second Missouri speech in Neosho; to admitting the testimony of Purcell and Dillingham, the two arresting officers; to the testimony of P. S. Dee, the newspaper reporter; to the question asked of Mrs. Gebhardt as to whether or not the defendant "approved" of what was going on in Russia; and to many other fine points of law. But most of the lawyers' objections centered on the fact that the trial had ranged far afield from the "crime" that Rose was

accused of committing, which was writing to the editor and causing her letter to be published, and to the judge's extraordinarily biased and prejudicial instruction to the jury—"an appeal to the passion and prejudice of the jury ... without relation to anything in evidence in the case, and persuasive as a whole to influence the jury to return a verdict of guilty.

"What the trial judge overlooked entirely, the gist of the whole matter," the lawyer wrote, "is that *the criminality charged* against this defendant is the effect of her single communication on other minds, with the results in military obstruction by the conduct of others." In other words, the lawyers contended, if the prosecution had been able to demonstrate that a single soldier had been insubordinate, or a single sailor had mutinied, as a result of Rose's little letter, it might have had a case. But instead all eleven of the witnesses were quizzed on what she might not have said in her lecture—an "attempt to prove one alleged crime by another."

Returning again and again to the letter, the lawyers pointed out that all Rose had said was that she was against the government. By this, they insisted, she meant that she was against the Wilson administration, "in the same sense in which every person who voted for candidates of the opposition last November was against the government." To vote for an opposition candidate, or to disapprove of what an administration was doing, was no crime. "Indeed," the lawyers wrote, "*we are against the government ... in fulfilling our professional obligations to Mrs. Stokes*" by taking her case, in which the government was her adversary. "Only the high temper and passion of the war spirit could account for the writing of this indictment.

"Finally," the lawyers added, "as to the letter and its understanding, what impact in any reading could these insignificant little sentences have to pervert the general philosophy and patriotism of any reader? Mrs. Stokes is not for the government; she is in the opposition. This is not so startling a discovery as to disrupt the mental poise of a reader... There was no scintilla of evidence of an obstruction of the recruiting service by this letter and its dissemination. There was no evidence ... that her letter constituted in any respect an interference with the success of our military forces and an aid to the military forces of the enemy."

And what business, her counselors wanted to know, did the judge have in bringing in this hypothetical analysis of what would happen if Russian

bolshevism were transported to America?“Why is any of this material included in the charge at all?... There was nothing about the Russians in the letter which is the basis for the indictment.” The lawyers labeled this “a shocking example of judicial impropriety,” and asked, “Under what sort of doctrine of judicial notice does the trial judge give to the jury the benefit of his certainty as to Russian events? This ... was more than an appeal to the passions of the jurors. It took away from the trial the character of a decorous criminal prosecution under the genius and liberality of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence.”

Russia had nothing to do with her letter. Neither did the loyalty of Great Britain’s colonies or the other Allies. In the course of what the lawyers termed a “meandering trial,” the judge had allowed masses of testimony on extraneous matters, such as Rose’s feelings “toward the war, the Red Cross, the Russian Revolution, Woodrow Wilson, patriotism versus internationalism, knitting socks for soldiers, and what not.”

At the end of their brief, Rose’s lawyers rather delicately brought up the matter of her rights of free speech, as guaranteed under the First Amendment to the Constitution. It was a tricky point, because a number of prominent American jurists and thinkers had already taken the stance that there were certain clauses in the Espionage Law itself that could be interpreted as an abridgment of free speech, and that the law itself was unconstitutional. Wisely, probably, Rose’s lawyers decided to skirt this last issue, but they did note that the trial judge had stated that “individualism must be put aside for the moment in this country.” Replied the lawyers, “If by ‘individualism’ the trial judge means the sum total of our individual liberties, then he sets aside the Constitution as a war measure, and this is beyond the remotest stretch of any act of Congress. We submit that it is the most vital function of the judiciary to serve an opposite role, to hold Congress jealously to the line of immunities and liberties preserved to the individual, in war as in peace, by the guarantees of the Constitution.”

The labors of Messrs. Stedman and Sullivan were, in the end, successful. The guilty verdict against Rose Stokes was overturned by the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, for the Western District of Missouri, and the government dropped its case. But much damage had nonetheless been done. The publicity surrounding the trial had left Rose branded in the public’s mind as some kind of traitor or spy, involved in

espionage, sedition, un-American and unpatriotic activities, against the war, opposed to the draft, in favor of a Bolshevik form of government, in favor of a similar revolution in America. Her lecture career—for which she had earned handsome honoraria—was over. Her name had become anathema.

Throughout the trial, James Graham Phelps Stokes had been a model of stoic, stiff-upper-lipped, upper-crust, if unhappy, supportiveness. He had obtained leave from his army duties to be with his wife, and appeared every day at her side—looking handsome in his captain’s uniform, a walking advertisement for patriotic duty—and of course he paid the considerable legal bills that the defense of his wife had entailed. But the trial had been an emotional as well as a financial strain, and the signs of this showed in new lines of weariness on his good-looking face, as well as in the abrupt way he dismissed newspaper reporters’ questions with, “No comment.” After the appeal was won, both Stokeses did their best to withdraw from the lime-light, and to retire to their private lives. But close friends and family members suspected that the ordeal of the trial had been a final test of the patience of Graham Stokes with his irrepressible Jewish wife, that the test had been failed, and that it was only a matter of time....

For America’s Eastern European Jews, 1919 would be a kind of watershed year. Three seemingly unconnected events—the outcome of the Russian revolution in 1917, the end of the First World War in 1919, and the advent of Prohibition that same year—would interweave and mesh in such a complex way, each event exerting a subtle but powerful force upon the others, that thousands of lives would be affected by their confluence.

The Russian revolution of 1917 took place in two stages—in February, when Nicholas II was overthrown, and in October, when the Bolshevik rule was established. Most Russian Jews greeted the news of the czar’s downfall, when it reached America, with great jubilation. Of the Bolsheviks’ takeover in October, there was less certainty and unanimity of approval. In New York, the conservative *Tageblatt* was disapproving, and editorialized that true freedom and order would not come to Russia until the Bolshevik movement had failed, and a representational democracy, on the lines of America’s, had been adopted. But the socialist-minded *Daily Forward* was rapturous, and its managing editor, Baruch Vladeck, wrote: “Life is strange: my body is in America. My heart and soul and life are in

that great wonderful land, which was so cursed and is now so blessed, the land of my youth and revived dreams—Russia.”

America’s entry into the war, meanwhile, effectively halted transatlantic immigration from Eastern Europe, and never again would there be such a tide of immigration as had been seen over the previous four decades.* Then, in the clamorous, almost hysterical spirit of jingoism that swept across America following the war, a flurry of increasingly restrictive United States immigration laws were passed that reduced immigration to a trickle, and virtually “froze” the American Jewish population at the figure where it then stood. These laws were drawn blatantly along racial and ethnic lines, and set strict quotas; they were accompanied by much patriotic breast-beating about eliminating “undesirables,” “the foreign element,” decrying “foreign ideologies,” and calling for “one hundred percent Americanism.”

It was as though America, having achieved victory in Europe, had decided that it must cleanse and purify itself and turn itself into not only the mightiest but also the most moral nation in the world. Vice and self-indulgence would be eliminated through prohibition of alcoholic drink. In the South, the Ku Klux Klan had been revived in the name of red-blooded Americanism, to show the black man who was boss, and even blacks who were war veterans were lynched. In this same mood, in Michigan, Henry Ford began publishing his *Dearborn Independent*, which immediately revealed strong overtones of anti-Semitism, and which would publish the spurious document *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. (The *Protocols*, a proven fake, claimed to reveal an international Jewish conspiracy to take over the world’s money.) For years after this, many Jews would refuse to buy a Ford car, and an embarrassed Mr. Vladeck of the *Daily Forward* would be chastised for accepting advertising from the Ford Motor Company, particularly since he had frequently refused to accept advertising from political parties with which he disagreed.

In the state of Tennessee, the teaching of the theory of evolution was outlawed as not being sufficiently patriotic and “Christian,” even though the story of Creation was written in the Old Testament. Immediately following the Russian revolution, the Lower East Side had surged with prosocialist and antisocialist rallies and meetings, but by 1919 events—including Rose Stokes’s trial—had made it clear that socialism was no longer an accepted American ideology. And a number of Eastern European Jews, remembering

that the czarist pogroms had been aimed at stamping out anticzarist socialist dissidents as much as anything else, began to wonder uneasily if the same sort of anti-Jewish, antisocialist violence might not be about to erupt in the United States. Others, like Mr. Vladeck, may have simply felt that their hearts and souls were still in Russia. In any case, by 1920, some twenty-one thousand Jews had left America to return to their spiritual homeland, declaring themselves “Former Prisoners [of Capitalism].”

Meanwhile, by 1919, the Lower East Side had changed drastically—both cosmetically and demographically—from what it had been in Miss Julia Richman’s heyday, and she no doubt would have approved the changes. Rough-cobbled streets had been paved with asphalt. Old docks in the East River had been converted into swimming pools. A number of new parks had been created, and handsome new schools and other public buildings had been built. Furthermore, the “Jewish Quarter,” or ghetto, could no longer be defined as existing between the boundaries of certain streets. The East Side was still a neighborhood of immigrants, but the Jews were moving out. By 1919, the pushcarts were all but gone, as the peddlers had moved indoors to shops, or to factories uptown. A few old-timers remained, not so much out of love as out of familiarity with their surroundings, but a new generation, American-born, had come of age since the 1880s, and had gone to college, studied to be lawyers, doctors, accountants, teachers, architects, had prospered and had moved away. This generation of Jews would leave their memories of the ghetto behind them. They would also, as we shall see, shuck the strict Orthodoxy of their parents, in favor of a more modern, more American, more assimilationist Judaism.

There had been setbacks, to be sure, in this outward and upward process of mobility. In 1914, three popular Russian-Jewish banks on the Lower East Side, run by the brothers M. and L. Yarmulowsky, Adolf Mandel, and Max Kobre, had collapsed. These banks had been very casually set up by men who made their depositors big promises but who had little banking expertise, and whose loan policies were, to say the least, fly-by-night. In August of that year, responding to rumors that the banks were in an unsound financial condition, the New York State banking superintendent shut down all three. There was an immediate panic on the Lower East Side, and in the investigation that followed, the banking commission’s worst fears were confirmed. The Yarmulowskys’ bank, for example, owed \$1,703,000,

and had assets of only \$654,000. The Mandel bank had \$1,250,000 less than what it owed.

That the hard-earned savings of thousands of immigrants were wiped out in these bank closings was, of course, a tragedy. But on the other hand, it was impossible not to be impressed by the fact that these savings, in 1914, represented collectively more than ten million dollars. Also, those Jewish savers who had been wiped out did not accept their fate meekly or docilely, or even philosophically, as they might have done a generation earlier, or as they certainly would have done back home in Russia, where such disasters had been routine. They were fighting mad. M. Yarmulowsky and his family had to escape across rooftops to avoid the angry mob that had gathered outside his house. Reserves were called out to control the hundreds of demonstrators in front of Mandel's house. And the furious depositors marched to the district attorney's office, demanding satisfaction, in the American way, through legal action against the perpetrators of the fiscal malefactions. As a result, Mandel was convicted of embezzlement, Yarmulowsky was found guilty and given a suspended sentence, and Kobre committed suicide.

And yet, by 1919, the Eastern European Jews were back on their feet again, and moving steadily out of the ghetto. Some were moving to pleasant brownstones along Prospect Park in Brooklyn. In once-suburban Harlem, where many middle-class Jews had already moved, there was a postwar influx of poor blacks from the rural South, and in response to this, Jewish families made the next logical move northward, into the Bronx. Here, big, new, and roomy apartment houses—some red brick, some tan, some gleaming, expensive white—were rising along the wide street that was then known as Speedway Boulevard and Concourse. Both Harlem and the Bronx were becoming what sociologists call “entry neighborhoods,” and they marked clear stages in the immigrants' passage out of poverty into some notion of respectability. Others moved to the Upper West Side, along Central Park West and West End Avenue, or, if they could afford it, to what by the 1920s had become the most fashionable Jewish address in the city, Riverside Drive, where there were big apartments with spacious views of the Hudson and the New Jersey Palisades beyond. From the affluence of Riverside Drive, it would seem only a step to the manicured lawns and

gardens of Scarsdale, or to Georgian mansions on Long Island's South Shore, or to tennis courts and polo fields in Beverly Hills.

*The lady traveling with Mr. Guggenheim, who was Mrs. Guggenheim, was rescued.

*Emma Goldman and the Polish-American anarchist Alexander Berkman had founded the anarchist journal *Mother Earth* in 1906, shortly after Berkman's release from prison for attempted murder—the shooting and stabbing of Henry Clay Frick in 1892 during a strike at the Carnegie-Phipps steel mill in Pennsylvania. In 1917, *Mother Earth* was suppressed, and its editors jailed. A year after Rose Stokes's trial, both Goldman and Berkman were indeed deported to Russia.

*Between 1933 and 1940, about 140,000 Jewish refugees from the Nazis arrived in the United States, mostly from Germany and Austria. Then, after World War II, another 150,000 who had somehow managed to escape the concentration camps arrived. About 12,000 of these were from Eastern Europe, and were ultra-Orthodox Hasidic Jews, with their side curls, black hats, suits, and overcoats, who settled in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn.

Part Two

GETTING OUT: 1920–1950

6

THE JEWISH LAKE AND OTHER CREATIONS

The uptown German Jews watched the emergence of the Russians as successful entrepreneurs with a curious commingling of emotions. On the one hand, there was a certain sense of relief and satisfaction: the “Jewish Quarter,” downtown, was no longer an embarrassment of crowding, poverty, illness, and ignorance; the settlement houses and other social programs that the uptown moguls had helped institute had done their jobs, and the Russians, no longer eyesores, were moving into the mainstream of American life. At their uptown, exclusively German Temple Emanu-El, wealthy German hands were no longer beseeched to dig into ample German pockets to help “our miserable brethren” on the Lower East Side, and this development was welcomed. But, on the other hand, this had all happened so fast that it was almost dismaying. The Germans had complained so bitterly to themselves of the Russian burden they had shouldered that it was almost disappointing to have the burden removed so quickly—as someone who has enjoyed poor health for a number of years, and all the perquisites of illness, may feel a letdown when told that he has been miraculously cured.

It had taken the Germans two and in some cases three generations to reach their status of wealth and almost assimilation. It had taken the Russians barely one. Was it possible that the Russians were, of all things, cleverer? The banker Felix Warburg, who was Jacob Schiff’s son-in-law, had actually met a few Russian Jews socially, and had announced, not without condescension, that he had found them “witty and interesting personalities.” Among the mixed emotions, that of jealousy could not be

ruled out. By 1920—the year, coincidentally, of Jacob Schiff’s death—it seemed uncomfortably possible that the Russians might one day eclipse the Germans, not only in terms of sheer numbers, but in terms of economic and social power. And it seemed possible that that day might not be far off.

Thus, the caste lines remained firmly drawn. The Russians did indeed seem enterprising; the Germans would admit that. But they also seemed brash, aggressive, pushy, loud, argumentative. They had not acquired the fine sheen of social polish that the Germans had striven so hard, and for so long, to possess. At a Jewish fundraising gathering at Felix Warburg’s Fifth Avenue house, a black-tie affair, two men were spotted who were not wearing dinner jackets. “They must be Russians,” one of Mr. Warburg’s sons whispered. The Russians, in other words, might have become successful, but they had not yet, in the Germans’ eyes, become ladies and gentlemen.

Even more perplexing, perhaps, was the fact that Russian Jews were not going into endeavors that were considered solid and respectable, such as stockbrokerage and investment banking and insurance. They were going into chancier fields. Since many Russian men and women had arrived with some experience as tailors and seamstresses, they had gone into tailoring and dressmaking, and were now taking over the entire garment industry, and in the process turning it into what would become the largest single industry in New York City. Previously, nearly all the cloak manufacturers had been Germans, and prior to 1900, the average American woman had been very poorly dressed. Rich women shopped for fashions in Europe, or had dressmakers to copy the European designs that appeared in American fashion magazines. But poorer women dressed in what amounted to sacks, with neither fit nor style. But once the Russians entered the business, all that began to change. The Germans had been merely merchants, but the Russians were artists and artisans. In addition to the concept of sizing, they brought with them a knowledge and appreciation of the colors and textures and weights of fabrics. Having worked as tailors in Russia, they knew how a pleat should fall, how a hem should hang, where a gusset or a gore or a dart should be placed. Russian furriers understood the qualities of furs by the feel and by the smell of untreated pelts, and they knew how sections of kid could be pieced together to conform to the shapes of women’s hands. Once they had mastered the mechanics of the garment industry—the

machines that had been unavailable in the old country—they were able to introduce to it literally thousands of innovations, to perfect and revolutionize the industry. With the new techniques of mass production, they were able to offer women stylish, well-fitting clothes off the racks at low prices, and by 1920 fashion was available to even the lowliest waitress or shopgirl. They had invented American fashion.

Still, to the Germans, it seemed an unbusinesslike enterprise, for what could be chancier, more unpredictable, than fashion, which was subject to shifting tastes, whims, and sudden fads? Fashion, furs, diamonds, jewelry—all wildly fluctuating commodities, all even riskier than show business. But the Russian Jews seemed to thrive on risks.

Crime, meanwhile, could hardly be considered a business at all. What could be a more win-or-lose, go-for-broke career than a life outside the law? That the East Side had produced a number of criminals was well known, and the attitude toward these people among the Russian-Jewish community was somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, Jewish parents did not point out these men to their children as examples of American success. And yet, at the same time, there was a certain grudging admiration for men who could buck the system and get away with it. The Jewish criminal wore snappy clothes, drove an expensive car, was good to his wife, and could afford to send his sons to Harvard instead of the City College of New York. There was a certain glamour about him, rather like a Hollywood movie star. Crime, after all, was another way out of the ghetto, and nobody could be faulted for wanting to get out. And, for some, it was proving a very *rapid* way out of the ghetto—as whirlwind a way as Rose Pastor's engagement and marriage. Also, for otherwise perfectly legitimate Jewish businessmen, it was often useful to have a friend with "connections" who could get things done expeditiously, without going through a lot of legal red tape. Union problems, for example, could often be handled with a little muscle from certain quarters. And so the Jewish criminal was not regarded, among Jews, as an enemy of society, but more as a part of the general American landscape. By 1920, Meyer Lansky had become part of this panorama.

There are at least two versions of how Meyer Lansky first became friendly with another tough young East Sider named Salvatore Lucania, later to become known as Charles "Lucky" Luciano. Lansky liked to recall that they had first encountered each other at what had threatened to become

a Lower East Side street battle between the Italians and the Jews, and how Luciano had been attracted by the tiny—fully grown, he was only a few inches over five feet tall—Lansky’s spunk and nerve. Luciano had called off the fight and later taken Lansky under his protection, gratis. Luciano would recall the initial meeting somewhat differently. Luciano had been earning extra pin money collecting pennies from Jewish youths for protection, but when he approached Lansky with the usual proposition, Lansky had replied, “Fuck you!” Impressed, Luciano had offered to supply Lansky with free protection, to which Lansky had replied, “Shove your protection up your ass!” Realizing that they were kindred spirits, the two became lifelong friends and business associates. This friendship, too, marked the beginning of a Jewish-Italian alliance against a common East Side enemy, the Irish.

Soon, into the Lansky-Luciano group came another, somewhat older Jewish youth named Benjamin Siegel. Siegel was a well-built, good-looking fellow who had quite a way with the ladies, and whose ambition in those days was to become a movie star. It was not such a farfetched notion, since one of his best friends was a young actor named George Raft. Raft had been a street fighter and gambler out of Hell’s Kitchen, and had boxed his way up from a number of small-time clubs all the way to Madison Square Garden, where he realized that he hadn’t the fighting ability to reach top boxing circles. He had turned to dancing in nightclubs and revues, and became famous overnight for teaching the young Prince of Wales to do the Charleston. From there, it was on to Broadway and Hollywood. His friend Benny Siegel, though, had kind of a wild streak in him. Most Jewish and Italian street toughs eschewed knives and guns, but Siegel was always armed with one weapon or another, and would brandish these at the slightest provocation. For this behavior, and other bizarre habits—it was said that Siegel invented the game called Russian roulette—he was labeled “crazy as a bedbug,” which earned him the nickname “Bugsy,” though this was an appellation his friends were careful never to use to his face. Bugsy Siegel, as we shall see, eventually did get to Hollywood, though not in the manner he had originally planned.

Into this loosely organized but very effective fraternity came other Lower East Side Jews: Abe “Kid Twist” Reles, whose nickname derived from the fact that even as a kid he was adept at the “twist” of extortion; Arnold “the

Brain” Rothstein, much admired for his ability to conceive and carry out grand schemes, and who came up with the notion of fixing the 1919 [baseball] World Series between the Chicago White Sox and the Cincinnati Reds. Then there was Jacob “Greasy Thumb” Guzik, whose thumb, it was said, was stained green from collecting bribes and blackmail; and Abner “Longie” Zwillman, whose nickname referred to the uncommon length of a certain anatomical endowment; and Louis “Lepke” Buchalter, whose doting mother called him “Lepkele,” or “little Louis,” and whose early career had involved picking pockets and robbing pushcarts. But from the very beginning of the organization, there was only one man who was its acknowledged leader—the little Caesar who planned the battles, deployed the troops, settled internal arguments, and, with his mathematical genius, kept the books—and that was Meyer Lansky. If much of the brawn of the group was supplied by others, it was Lansky who supplied the brains.

Lansky never liked to think of his chosen means of livelihood as anything other than a business. It might not be a legitimate business, but it was still a business, and Lansky tried to keep it on as businesslike a level—no tampering with the books—as possible. It was a business, as he saw it, that was designed to cater to certain basic human needs—a service business. Human beings liked to gamble, and would gamble whether gambling was legal or not, and so Lansky and his associates would put themselves at the service of gamblers. At the same time, Lansky had his own strict moral code. He would not, for example, involve himself in prostitution. Prostitution could also be rationalized as fulfilling a human need, but Lansky would have none of it. Some of his partners called him a prude for this, and in a way he was. But he was also something of a snob. He considered prostitution dehumanizing, but it also got one mixed up with all the wrong sort of people. As a boy, he had seen a beautiful Jewish prostitute named Rachel, to whom he had taken a fancy, beaten to death in a back alley by her Jewish pimp. The grisly, sordid scene remained etched in his mind.

He felt the same way about trafficking in narcotics. Again, the people who were in the drug trade struck him as lowlifes whom he wouldn’t want to be seen with, and the addicts they served were the dregs of humanity. Lansky had his standards. In many ways, if you overlooked his source of income, Meyer Lansky was a young gentleman of the old school. As he

began to prosper from his gambling operations, he remained a conservative fellow. His friend Bugsy Siegel might favor loud neckties and flashy sport coats, but Lansky always dressed quietly in well-cut three-button suits—which, with his slight figure, he usually bought in the boys' department of Macy's. He did not look like a “gangster,” nor did he act like one. In manner, he was genial, soft-spoken—except, of course, when crossed. He was also a devoutly pious Jew and faithfully kept the Sabbath.

Still, Lansky and Company's business might have remained a relatively small one had it not been for an event that, for an organization dedicated to serving human needs, amounted to nothing less than a windfall. On January 16, 1919, the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States was ratified, to become law one year later. The amendment banned the manufacture, sale, and transportation of liquor, wine, beer, or other intoxicating substances. Nine months later, over President Wilson's veto, the Volstead Act was passed by Congress, toughening the Prohibition laws and setting up the machinery for their enforcement. The Women's Christian Temperance Union had been triumphant; the “noble experiment” had begun.

Perhaps never in the history of government folly had an experiment so doomed to failure been undertaken, and certainly never had a scheme so outwardly drenched in piety and righteousness been embarked upon with so much cynicism. America had been a drinking nation since pre-Colonial times, and there was nothing to indicate that Prohibition could change this. Instead, Prohibition was an open invitation to break the law, and to break it in the most daring, glamorous, and exciting ways. Drinking in America had always been associated with parties and good times, and now Prohibition offered Americans a chance to go on a prolonged, illegal binge. Even as Prohibition was being enacted into law, the very legislators who had voted for it were planning ways of obtaining their own personal supplies of liquor. The “year of grace” allowed wealthy hoarders plenty of time to stock their cellars for years to come. Furthermore, it gave legitimate bars and restaurants time to convert to illicit speakeasies, so that by the early 1920s, there were thousands in the city of New York alone. It also allowed men like Meyer Lansky and his friends the time to develop an elaborate game plan for buying and marketing alcoholic beverages, so that when the Volstead Act finally went into effect, they had a virtually foolproof strategy

for working around the law. On the very eve of Prohibition, nightclub comics joked about the various ways of obtaining liquor that would become available the following day. Had it not been for Prohibition, men like Lansky, Luciano, and Siegel might have continued as operators of small-time gambling parlors, living in a series of cold-water tenement flats. But Prohibition offered a golden door to riches—for Lansky, what would become one of the larger personal fortunes in America—all for helping Americans defy an unpopular law. The profits, as Lansky saw them, would be far greater than those from gambling operations; the penalties were far less; and the chance of those penalties being enforced was infinitesimal. Once again, he was in a service business. And he was not yet twenty.

There were two kinds of bootleggers, from the beginning. One dealt in cheap, watered-down liquor and in homemade brews from basement stills. The other dealt in the real thing. Lansky counseled his associates to join the latter group. Partly, it was his snobbish nature. But also, he reasoned, dealing in cut, ersatz liquor—in which a bottle labeled “Scotch” might be only colored water, raw alcohol, and a splash of real Scotch for flavor—meant that one’s clientele would consist mostly of skid-row bums and the sleaziest bars; there would be little repeat business. If, on the other hand, one could offer good, uncut, imported Scotches and gins that had not been tampered with, one would be dealing with the well-heeled—along with the most expensive bars and clubs—who would pay anything for top quality and who, once they had learned to trust their bootlegger, would come back for more of the same. Lansky had also read a book called *Making Profits*, written a few years earlier by a Harvard professor of economics named William Taussig. In it, Professor Taussig had outlined the law of supply and demand. What it meant, Lansky explained to his less literate associates, was, “If you have a lot of what people want and can’t get, then you can supply the demand and shovel in the dough.” Among his friends, this quickly became known as “Lansky’s Law,” and it would become the basic precept by which organized crime would live from that point onward, just as legitimate capitalist society lived by it, and had been living by it, all along.

But there was more to it than that. As Prohibition began to lift the underworld from what had been a loosely organized group of friends, relatives, and acquaintances into the stratosphere of Big Business, the many

ramifications of the Volstead Act became quickly clear. For the average consumer, Prohibition meant essentially one thing: the cost of liquor went up, to cover the costs of the risks involved. But times were prosperous, and the average consumer understood the situation, and cheerfully paid the price. There was money to be made in all directions. Foreign distillers could raise their prices for the illicit American market. The speakeasies that instantly sprang up across the countryside became instantly prosperous, since they could charge their “member” customers more for drinks by the glass than had previously been charged in legal bars. Soon it was estimated that there were at least twenty-two thousand speakeasies on the island of Manhattan alone—far more than there had ever been legitimate bars. (One popular speakeasy on West Fifty-second Street, Jack and Charlie’s 21 Club, operated by two brothers named Kriendler, was the forerunner of today’s posh and elegant “21” Restaurant as well as the prestigious “21”-brand liquors.) The makers of fruit juices, mixers, and sweeteners also made money, since the flavors of inferior liquors could be disguised by colas and syrups. (The mixed “cocktail” was a Prohibition invention of necessity.) Bootleggers in the smallest towns could make money. Even poor Italians on the Lower East Side, who had been brewing their own wines and spirits in their homes for years, found themselves proprietors of profitable neighborhood liquor stores. Into all these sources of money Meyer Lansky plunged. As his network of connections in other American cities grew, where local gamblers knew as well as he that their patrons spent more at the gaming tables when their inhibitions had been loosened by alcohol, it was natural that his group should extend its operations into the illegal import of liquor.

Some of the earliest attempts to smuggle liquor into the United States were clumsy and naive. The term “bootlegging,” for example, derived from stuffing bottles of liquor into the tops of oversized boots to foil customs inspectors at American borders. Some carried in liquor strapped to their persons under bulky coats.*

For American bootleggers, the handiest source of liquor was Canada, with its long and relatively unguarded border, much of which was wilderness, and as bootlegging grew more profitable, its methods became more sophisticated. Before crossing the border, for example, a truck driver with a load of contraband would select a dirt road, and then attach heavy

chains to his rear bumper. He would then charge across the border, refusing to stop for the customs inspector, while his dragging chains kicked up so much dust that he was impossible to follow.

Liquor made its way into Canada from England, Ireland, Scotland, and Europe by way of two tiny French islands (actually a *département* of France) off the Newfoundland coast that most people have never heard of, Saint Pierre and Miquelon. Here the shipments were uncrated for redistribution to the American bootleg market, and most of the wooden houses on the principal, virtually treeless island of Saint Pierre were built with lumber obtained from castoff liquor crates. From Canada, a particularly popular route of shipment was by boat across Lake Erie, where long stretches of shoreline on both the American and Canadian sides were unpopulated, but where old logging roads led inland from the shore to connect with main arteries. One of Meyer Lansky's first assignments to his underlings was to have maps drawn of these uncharted roads. In his youth, he had worked briefly as an automobile mechanic, and had learned quite a lot about cars. A side operation was organized to service, repair, and camouflage stolen trucks and other vehicles that were used to transport liquor to the marketplace.

Meanwhile, bootlegging had suddenly become a glamorous occupation, and the bootlegger a glamorous figure. Bootleggers in the early 1920s were like cowboy heroes out of the Old West who took the law into their own hands, and women chattered about their favorite bootleggers as they might about their favorite hairdressers ("We've found the most wonderful new bootlegger ..."). In small towns, the bootlegger gained almost the same respect and social status as the local doctor, lawyer, or undertaker. In the cities, bootleggers were invited to all the best parties, and had their pick of the most desirable women. The term "gangster" was used almost reverentially, and Hollywood gangster movies achieved great popularity. A number of silent film stars of the era—Pola Negri, Gloria Swanson, Renée Adorée—were said to have taken gangster lovers. In the best hotels and restaurants, men reputed to be gangsters were given the best tables. When gangsters were recognized, children asked for their autographs.

There were dangers involved in bootlegging, of course, but they were relatively slight. Despite the desperate efforts of American lawmen to police the Canadian border, it was estimated that only five percent of the

smuggled booty was ever successfully stopped or confiscated—and any legitimate salesman who succeeded in getting ninety-five percent of his merchandise sold would have considered himself more than fortunate. Occasionally, there were unsettling incidents. In 1927, a convoy of trucks carrying liquor from Ireland was ambushed outside of Boston. The Irish guards who were in charge of the shipment opened fire on the ambushers, and before the shooting was over eleven men lay dead.

The ambushers, who were working for the Lansky organization, were able to make off with the whiskey, but Lansky himself was furious. Whiskey, he roared, was replaceable, but human lives were not. Besides, eleven bodies strewn along the roadside meant that there would be police and federal investigations—the last things he wanted. His men had been instructed that, whenever any actual shooting started, they should run for their lives, and no doubt the Lansky employee who returned the Irish fire would have been disciplined, were it not for the fact that he was already dead.

Later, Lansky learned that the “importer” of the Irish whiskey whom he had robbed was the son of a Boston bartender, Joseph P. Kennedy. For the rest of his life, Lansky would claim that Joseph Kennedy had passed on his vendetta to his sons, Bobby and John, and that Bobby Kennedy’s efforts, as United States attorney general, to root out organized crime were in fact a personal attempt to “get even” with Lansky for that long-ago hijacking.*

Meanwhile, to the north of Lake Erie, another gentleman was emerging who was becoming very important to Meyer Lansky and his flourishing American bootleg business. His name was Samuel Bronfman, and it was not long before Lansky and Bronfman had entered into an arrangement that would be enormously profitable to both.

Sam Bronfman was also the son of Russian-Jewish immigrants, but there the similarity ended. Unlike Lansky’s parents, Sam Bronfman’s father, Yechiel, had been reasonably well-to-do in the old country. Yechiel Bronfman had owned a gristmill and a good-sized tobacco plantation in Bessarabia, in southwestern Russia, and had thought himself on good terms with the czarist government. All that ended, however, in the face of the Alexandrine pogroms, and in 1889 Yechiel decided to emigrate, leaving the plantation and gristmill behind him. Nonetheless, when the Bronfman

family set out for North America, they could afford to bring with them a personal maid, a manservant, and even their own personal rabbi—plus the rabbi's wife and two children. Nor was theirs a piecemeal emigration; the Bronfmans traveled as a family. With Yechiel came his nearly nine-months-pregnant wife, Minnie, their two sons, Abe and Harry, and a daughter, Laura. On shipboard, their third son, Sam, was born. (Later, like Sam Goldwyn, Sam Bronfman would take a couple of years off his age and claim to have been born in 1891, not 1889, and give his birthplace as Brandon, Manitoba, rather than the mid-Atlantic.)

The family's initial destination was the little Canadian village of Wapella, in southwestern Saskatchewan, where the Canadian government was offering homesteading sites to immigrants. In the next few years, Wapella—the neighboring towns bore such names as Red Jacket, Uno, Beulah, Birtle, and Moosomin—would become one of the first all-Jewish settlements in North America.

But the ocean crossing, or perhaps the trauma of resettling his family, seemed to take some of the enterprising spirit out of Yechiel Bronfman, who soon simplified his name to Ekiel. He was unprepared for the rigorous climate of the Saskatchewan prairie, and it was soon clear that the sacks of tobacco seed he had brought with him from Russia, intending to start a new plantation, would be of no use to him here. The first summer, he tried wheat, but his crop was killed by frost, and presently he was forced to abandon farming and was reduced to going into the bush, where he cut logs to sell for firewood. With a sleigh and yoke of oxen, he hauled his wood into town, some twenty miles away. The family's first home was a drafty lean-to, and their diet consisted mainly of potatoes, dried apples, and prunes. To further straiten the family's circumstances, four more children were born in fairly rapid succession—Jean, Bessie, Allen, and Rose—giving Ekiel Bronfman eight children's mouths to feed. Times were hard.

But by the mid-1890s, when the two oldest boys, Harry and Abe, were old enough to help their father, there was improvement. From hauling and selling firewood, the Bronfmans were able to branch out into selling frozen whitefish to their Jewish neighbors. The sleigh and oxen were replaced by a horse and wagon, and the Bronfmans, father and sons, would transport anything that their neighbors needed carted. The drayage business led them naturally into a bit of horse-trading. Most of these trades took place in the

bar of a local hotel called the Langham, the town's only watering place, and for some of these transactions Ekiel brought along his next-youngest son, Sam. Sam would be seated on a barstool, told to keep his mouth shut and his ears open and learn the business. One thing young Sam apparently noticed during these long horse-trading afternoons at the Langham bar was that a great deal of liquor was being consumed there, and with relish.

One day, according to a family story, Sam Bronfman, age eleven, was on his way to the Langham with his father to close a deal over drinks, and said, "The Langham's bar makes more profit than we do, Father. Instead of selling horses, we should be selling drinks."

If the story is true, it was a shrewd observation. In the early 1900s, the hotel and bar business was a lucrative one in Canada. The railroads were rapidly opening up the western part of the country, and hotel space was at a premium. A hotel could not survive without a bar, which was where it made most of its money. Ekiel Bronfman seems to have sparked to his son's suggestion. There was, after all, a curious coincidence. The name "Bronfman," in Yiddish, means "brandy man." Though no known Bronfman ancestor had been in the liquor business, they had dealt in grain—an ingredient of whiskey.

Financing a hotel venture, it turned out, was no great problem. Eager to promote more bars, distillers and liquor-store owners were willing to lend money to promising hotel operators. This was how, in 1902, Ekiel Bronfman was able to scrape together the money to buy his first hotel—the Anglo American in Emerson, Manitoba.

The Anglo American, as expected, prospered. Ekiel was able to repay his loan, and presently the Bronfmans could expand their interests again, this time investing in a series of modest apartment houses. Soon there were three more hotels, in Winnipeg.

The quality of the hotel clientele in western Canada in those pioneering days was, of course, not uniformly high, and later it would be claimed that the Bronfman caravansaries were little more than brothels in disguise. To this, Sam Bronfman liked to reply, "If they were, then they were the best in the West!" But what is certain is that from the beginning it was Sam who was the guiding spirit of the hotel business, and whose chief bailiwick was the bar receipts.

By 1916, these receipts had mounted to the point where Sam was able to purchase his first retail liquor outlet, the Bonaventure Liquor Store Company in Montreal, which was then Canada's largest city. The store was small, but it was well located, near the railroad station, where travelers leaving for the western provinces—many of which were going dry—could get in their supplies. Also, it enabled Sam Bronfman to be his own supplier, eliminating the cost of a middleman.

Meanwhile, south of the border, the advocates of Prohibition were gathering their forces. Everywhere the Carrie Nations of America were taking to the lecture platform, proclaiming that alcohol was undermining American industry, the home, the family, the teachings of Jesus, the will of God. The Anti-Saloon League of New York even claimed that drink had been behind the Russian revolution. "Bolshevism flourishes in wet soil," one of its leaflets warned. "Failure to enforce Prohibition in Russia was followed by Bolshevism. Failure to enforce Prohibition here will encourage disrespect for [the] law and invite Industrial Disaster. Radical and Bolshevist outbreaks are practically unknown in states where Prohibition has been in effect for years. BOLSHEVISM LIVES ON BOOZE."

From such rumblings in the United States, and the fact that the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment began to seem assured, it occurred to Sam Bronfman that this might well be the moment to move from bartending and liquor retailing into manufacturing. Yet another middleman would be eliminated.

"Distilling" would be too polite a word to use for Sam's initial efforts. It was more like simple mixology. From the United States, he was able to buy several hundred thousand gallons of raw, overproof alcohol at bargain prices in the panicky pre-Prohibition sell-offs. This he simply thinned with an equal amount of water, added about half as much again real whiskey, and tossed in a bit of caramel for color, plus a dash of sulfuric acid. The purpose of the sulfuric acid was to speed the aging process. While real Scotch whiskey might be aged for two to twelve years, Bronfman Scotch could be aged in about two days. To be sure, there were some mishaps in the beginning. One batch of "Scotch" came out of the vat an alarming purple color. But with more thinning with real Scotch, and some more caramel, the right color was finally achieved and the batch was thereby saved. Next, all Sam had to do was bottle the results and slap on labels. A printer was found

who promised that he could produce convincing counterfeits. To be sure, some of his work was either amateurish or deliberately misleading. Johnnie Walker came out as Johnny Walker, Glenlivet was Glen Levitt, and Haig and Haig was Hague and Hague. But few of the customers seemed to notice.

What no one noticed, either—not even Sam Bronfman himself—was that with this haphazard mixing of alcohol, real whiskey, and other ingredients, Bronfman was in the process of inventing a whole new category of alcoholic beverage: blended whiskey. Could he have possibly known, as early as 1920, that one day the most popular and largest-selling whiskeys on the North American continent would be blends? Or that he himself would one day elevate blending to an art form with the declaration, “Distilling is a science; blending is an art”? But what Sam Bronfman surely noticed—as came to light in 1922, when the Canadian government began wondering why none of the Bronfmans had filed any income tax returns—was that a mixture that cost only \$5.25 a gallon to produce could be bottled and sold for \$25 a gallon. And that, when the distillery was running well, it could process five thousand gallons a week, which put sales figures at half a million dollars a month, or an annual profit of more than \$4,500,000.

With Prohibition in effect, Meyer Lansky, who was now very much aware of Sam Bronfman’s operation, at first dismissed him as an amateur; his product simply was not good enough for the kind of customers Lansky wanted to serve. But Sam, putting his brother Harry in charge of the distilling operations, had been busily running about the countryside and dashing off to Britain to line up Canadian and Scottish distillers and persuading them to let him be their distributor. He had also, with his profit sheets, been able to make a convincing case for himself with Canadian banks, and to obtain loans, which gave him added capital with which to perfect his blending process—so that every bottle of whiskey produced under the same label would taste the same as every other. And once the Saint Pierre-Miquelon connection had been established, with Sam able to import bona fide brands, Lansky became interested. Sam Bronfman came down from Canada and wooed Lansky with lavish dinners. Lansky responded by getting Bronfman tickets to the heavyweight “prizefight of the century,” between Jack Dempsey and Luis Angel Firpo in 1923. A deal

was struck, and the two men became partners, a relationship that lasted through Repeal and after.

What impressed Lansky the most was that what Bronfman was doing was all perfectly legal—in Canada, that is. Bronfman had no trouble with customs or police on the Canadian side of the border. In fact, the Ottawa government actually encouraged the export of liquor to the United States by refunding the nine-dollar-a-gallon tax that it imposed on all liquor sold for consumption within Canada.* What was good for Canadian distillers, Ottawa argued, was good for Canada, and in the first year after the passage of the Volstead Act, export sales shot up to a record twenty-three million dollars—a considerable boost to the Canadian economy. As the Canadian *Financial Post* editorialized, “Rum running has provided a tidy bit towards Canada’s favourable balance of trade.”

Sam Bronfman and Meyer Lansky made an odd pair. Like Lansky, Bronfman was short of stature and, at five feet five inches, stood only an inch taller than his American dealer. But whereas Lansky was thin, and never weighed more than 135 pounds at any point in his life, Bronfman tended to plumpness, and his round, pink face often shone with a deceptively cherubic twinkle. Also, whereas Lansky was basically only interested in making money, Sam Bronfman had begun to entertain far greater ambitions. The Canadian social establishment was, and to an extent still is, a tight-knit one of old, Anglo-Saxon, Church of England families, who regarded themselves as a smaller and, if anything, more select aristocracy than the British nobility, on whom they modeled their behavior and attitudes. Their ranks were guarded by such exclusive men’s clubs as Montreal’s Mount Royal and Saint James’s. Sam Bronfman, now in his thirties and a rich man, had begun to court the members of this hidebound Canadian inner circle, with an eye to one day being included in its membership. In the process, he would feign elaborate disinterest in the source of his new wealth, and would bridle at the suggestion that he himself was a “bootlegger.” In his bespoke suits from Savile Row and his hand-benched English shoes from Lobb of London, he affected the appearance of an English country squire in the city for a few days on a bit of business. He even added a few Britishisms to his speech with an occasional “I say!” or “Fancy that!” He professed indifference to the ultimate destination of his whiskey during Prohibition—that was in the hands of men like Meyer

Lansky. Never, he insisted, had he ever transported a single drop illegally across the border, nor, he would add with a wink, had he ever counted the empty bottles of his brands on the other side of Lake Erie. Instead, he concentrated on building an imposing turreted mansion at the summit of Westmount, Montreal's most fashionable suburb, and began filling it with "ancestral" trappings—suits of armor, "family portraits" of no known origin—all with the aim of creating an effect of instant Old Money. The name he gave to the Westmount residence said it all: Belvedere Palace.

He did, however, contribute a few ideas to Meyer Lansky's operation, and came up with at least one "invention" that the American bootleggers found useful. One of the things that the revenueurs looked for along the lakeshore was the telltale sign of heavy tire-tread marks along the muddy bank, indicating that a truck had backed to the water's edge to receive a load of liquor from a boat. To eliminate clues like this, Sam Bronfman proposed that a series of sturdy boards be lashed together with wire or rope. One side of this flexible platform would be sodded with grass. When a boat was ready to unload, the grassy side of the contraption could be flipped over to produce a wooden ramp, down which trucks could be backed. When the operation was completed, the ramp was reversed again so that a customs inspector, looking for tire tracks, would see only a pristine grassy sward. It was a device that was as simple as it was cheap to make. Each reversible ramp lasted a week or so, until the grass died. Then it was resodded.

In 1922, Sam Bronfman was thirty-three and very rich, but a dynast without a dynasty. He had already begun to think of himself as a latter-day Rothschild, but the House of Bronfman was not yet a House. It was time, he decided, for him to marry and start producing heirs, or Heirs; and, since "Mr. Sam," as he was now being addressed, was the unquestioned kingpin of his family, he decided that some of his brothers and sisters should marry as well. For his bride, Sam chose a Manitoba girl named Saidye Rosner, whose father, Samuel, had also emigrated to Canada from Bessarabia, and had achieved a certain distinction for having briefly served as mayor of the little town of Plum Coulee. Sam and Saidye were married on June 20, and two days later Sam's sister Rose married Maxwell Rady, a Winnipeg doctor. Then both newlywed couples boarded a train to Ottawa, where Sam's brother Allan married Lucy Bilsky on June 28. From mere, Sam and Allan

and their respective brides left for Vancouver, where Sam wanted to look over a distillery.

That Sam and Saidye's marriage was not a particularly romantic one is clear from the fact that Sam rarely spent more than two or three nights a month at home in Montreal. Keeping track of his growing business kept him dashing back and forth across the face of Canada. Also, since his principal source of revenue was coming from the United States, he was required to be in New York so often that he leased a Pullman compartment on the Montreal–New York Express on a permanent basis so that he didn't have to bother with reservations. He was spending so much time in New York in fact—living in a series of increasingly opulent hotel suites—that a number of American friends suggested to him that he might consider becoming a citizen of the country to which he owed such an expansive style of living. But at this suggestion he balked. Partly it was out of an innate provincialism; Canada had been lucky for him, and he was unwilling and unready to tamper with that luck in a larger, richer country. Also, in the United States it would be difficult to escape the label “bootlegger,” whereas in Canada, where what he was selling was perfectly legal, there remained a chance that he might one day achieve the thing he wanted most—acceptance by the social establishment—even though it still eluded him.

There was an even more important reason. The United States did not confer ennobling titles upon its citizens. In Britain, the great distillers had become viscounts, barons, and baronets. There were Lord Dewar, Sir Alexander Walker (of Johnnie Walker), Lord Woolavington, Lord Forteviot, Sir James Charles Calder, and Field Marshal Earl Haig. Canada didn't often confer knighthoods on its citizens, but it sometimes did. Ottawa had already expressed its gratitude to Sam Bronfman's industry in various ways. Then why, someday, should there not be a Sir Samuel Bronfman, and a Lady Saidye Bronfman? It did not seem an impossibility. And it would have a nice ironic twist—the family that had fled Russia to escape the persecution of the nobility, elevated to a nobility all its own in a single generation's time.

Meanwhile, Sam's profitable connection with Meyer Lansky and his growing organization continued apace. Sam Bronfman might not consider himself a bootlegger, but Lansky and Company certainly did. As Lansky's chief confederate, Lucky Luciano, put it, Sam Bronfman “was bootleggin’

enough whiskey across the Canadian border to double the size of Lake Erie.”

It was no wonder that wags in the liquor trade were beginning to refer to Lake Erie as “the Jewish lake.”

*This author’s own mother, returning from Europe, made her way safely, if clinking slightly and looking somewhat overweight, with bottles plunged into her girdle and a bottle in each cup of her brassiere.

*Conspiracy theories of the two Kennedy assassinations have noted the longstanding Kennedy-Lansky feud, suggesting that organized crime was behind both murders. Adding to this is the fact that Jack Ruby was a Jewish barkeep who may, or may not, have had Lansky connections. Many Jewish barkeeps did.

*For the Bronfmans, an “incentive” bonus of \$180,000 a month. Not bad.

7

FITTING IN

Not all Eastern European Jews emigrated to America to escape persecution and pogroms. In White Russia, for example—that section of western Russia known as Byelorussia—the situation was somewhat different. Though anti-Semitism was rife, the notorious pogroms of the 1880s and 1890s did not spread there. The province was, however, easily the most socially and economically backward in the land, and most of the White Russian Jews who, along with many of their Christian neighbors, emigrated in the years before the revolution did so simply to escape grinding poverty, in search of the financial promises that beckoned from the west. Many found what they were seeking, including William Fisher—born Velvil Fisch—who arrived in New York in 1906 and headed westward, working briefly in a mattress factory. Fisher in time laid the groundwork for what today is the Aurora Gasoline Company of Detroit, and his son, Max M. Fisher, adviser on economics to United States Presidents, is known as “the richest Jew in Detroit,” and enjoys giving the following directions to his office: “Take the Fisher Freeway to Fisher Boulevard, to the Fisher Building ...”*

In Hungary, an altogether different set of circumstances prevailed, and in the late nineteenth century the status of the Jews in Hungary was probably higher than in any other European country. After nearly a century of rebellion against the Austrian emperor, the lords of upper Hungary were defeated early in the eighteenth century, and the heads of the Hungarian noble houses fled to Turkey and Poland. Their estates were confiscated by the Austrian Crown, and were parceled out to pro-Austrian adherents—thus creating a whole new Hungarian aristocracy. This instant gentry not only owned large sections of towns, villages, and cities; they also controlled the

government, the army, and the universities. On their vast agrarian estates, they controlled the peasant population that toiled for them, and it was here that the Jews had made themselves useful.

The new archdukes and barons much preferred their city palaces to their country estates, and the Jews, meanwhile, had for many years handled the trade in grain and cattle between the country demesnes and the cities, as well as in foreign markets. It was convenient, then, for the absentee landlords to lease their estates to Jews, who saw to it that the rents were paid and collected, and delivered to the city lords. With such leases went all the privileges of the country squire, including occupancy of the manor house and keeping a leash on the peasants, who were required to work a number of days each week in payment for their tenant hold. The Jews, then, lived at a level just below that of a landed aristocracy. During the Hungarian revolution of 1848, they had been given full citizenship rights, and thereafter became ardent Magyar patriots. The landed Jews went in for sports, politics, and patronage of the arts. It was not uncommon to see these privileged Jews driving their snappy four-in-hands into town with uniformed hussars seated on top of their boxes. Such Jews, who still considered themselves Jews, had nonetheless abandoned most of the trappings of Orthodoxy and, indeed, by lower-class Jews were scornfully—if enviously—called “pork-eaters.”

It was from this sort of, though not quite, upper-crust background that a Hungarian-Jewish youngster named Emery Roth grew up in a part of Hungary that is now Slovakia, at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains where they slope to meet the Hungarian plain. His family owned the local hotel, the only two-story structure in town and very much the nerve center, where all important meetings and civic events took place. As an indication of his family’s social status, he was one of the few local children deemed worthy of being invited to play with the children of the local baron and baroness. He was well educated in the local academy, and showed considerable talent as an artist. But then, in his early teens, bad luck struck the family. His father died, his mother was forced to take an older son out of school to help her run the hotel, and Emery was just one mouth too many to feed. His choice: emigration. At the time, he was deeply embarrassed by this, and invented a story, which he told his friends and schoolmates, that he was going to Munich to study art. “I was ashamed to tell them that I was

going to America,” he wrote, “because the need to emigrate is a confession of poverty, a disgrace no one—at any rate, any boy, will confess to.” He left home in the winter of 1884, and arrived at Castle Garden five weeks later.

Outwardly, the circumstances of his emigration seemed propitious. His principal language was Magyar, which was the language of the Hungarian educated classes, but he was also fluent in Slovene, knew quite a bit of German, and had studied Latin. Surely, he presumed, language would present no problem to him, a linguist, in the United States. He also felt that, for a youth of fifteen, he had had quite a sophisticated upbringing. As a hotelkeeper’s son, he wrote, “I attended balls, theatrical performances, town meetings, saw carousing and fights and heard the careless talk of all sorts of men. Before I was six years old I had a chance to listen and gape at the varied strata of our population, drunk and sober, from the Field Marshal and high officers that stopped at the hotel when the maneuvers were held in the Carpathians, through the gentry which we housed during the autumn week of the hare drive and the winter boar hunts, on down to the travelling salesmen and the easygoing public officials and townspeople and finally to the soldiers and peasants who frequented that portion of the establishment known as the inn. Magyar, Slovak, Pole, German, Jew, rich and poor, all were guests at our house.”

Then, too, a visiting American from Chicago had promised to take young Roth under his wing during the journey over, and to see that the young immigrant found suitable employment when he arrived. This American, who had returned to Hungary to visit his parents, was Aladar V. Kiss, and it was obvious that Mr. Kiss had become a very rich and important person. His calling card and letterhead said so. They proclaimed him to be a “Real Estate Agent,” which Mlle Clothilde—the baron’s children’s governess—helpfully translated for the Roths. The words, she explained, stood for “Veritable State Administrator,” which certainly sounded imposing. The calling card also proclaimed that Mr. Kiss was involved in “Management, Mortgages and Appraisals.” In addition, it announced that he was a “Notary Public.” In Hungary, a notary was a very high government official.

Young Roth did not see much of Mr. Kiss during the ocean crossing, since Roth discovered that he had been placed in steerage, while Mr. Kiss luxuriated above decks in cabin class. He did, however, see Kiss again briefly in New York. Kiss directed him to an immigrant shelter on the

Battery, handed him seven dollars and change, and a ticket on an immigrant train to Chicago, worth an additional dollar. Then Kiss scribbled an address on a piece of paper, told Roth to look him up when he got to Chicago and he would find him a job.

The trip on the immigrant train to Chicago, at that time, took two days and two nights, since the train was constantly being shunted off onto sidings to make way for more important carriers. During the course of this journey, living on a diet of overripe bananas—a fruit he had never seen before, but which cost only five cents a dozen—Roth discovered that he had somehow lost Mr. Kiss's address. No matter, he thought. Surely everyone in Chicago would know the whereabouts of someone as important as Aladar V. Kiss. Imagine his dismay, therefore, upon detraining at Union Station, when no one he spoke to had ever heard of the great Mr. Kiss. No one, furthermore, seemed to speak any of Roth's four languages. "I was rather surprised how few people understood me," he wrote. "I assumed, knowing what a horde of Europeans had emigrated, that most people in America would understand some one of the languages I knew, but it seemed that they were all what I called English."

He spent the next few hours wandering disconsolately about Union Station, with a little more than four dollars left, wondering what to do next. With him in the station was a group of soldiers from Company C of the Grand Army of the Republic who had a few hours to kill while waiting for a train that would take them back to their detachment at Fairplains, Illinois. Most were killing the time bibulously, and it was inevitable that a few of them should notice the plight of the luckless youth, and take pity on him. At the height of their jollity, one cheery soldier announced that he had a splendid idea. Why not take young Roth back to camp with them as Company C's mascot? That was how Roth found himself on another train, heading for an American military base, where, he discovered the next day, a mascot's job was polishing the boots of servicemen.

Still, he did learn one important lesson early on. He began making sketches of his new protectors. The men who posed for him offered to pay him for their likenesses, and at first Roth refused to accept money from them. But he was taken aside by one soldier, and it was carefully explained to him through gestures and Pidgin English: This was America. In America, one should expect to be paid for services rendered. He could not allow

himself to produce these clever sketches for nothing; if he did, he would be thought a fool. He must charge, furthermore, whatever he thought the market would bear.

And America, as we know, is the land of miracles. Was it possible that this luckless youth would in not too many years' time become the founder and president of one of New York City's great architectural firms, Emery Roth and Sons? It was. If there is one street corner in New York that is perhaps the most prestigious, it is the corner of Park Avenue and Fifty-seventh Street—a great commercial-residential nexus, where the commerce of lower Manhattan meets the residential grandeur of upper Park Avenue. The building on the northeast corner of this intersection, the Ritz Tower Hotel, was designed by Emery Roth himself. The skyscraper on the northwest corner was designed by his son Richard. The tower on the southwest corner is by his grandson, Richard Roth, Jr. A fourth-generation Roth, waiting in the wings, has already stated his intention of designing a building for the fourth, and only remaining non-Roth, corner.

In the larger cities of Eastern Europe—Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Krakow, Warsaw—it was also easier for the Jew to survive the pogroms that savaged the smaller settlements of the Pale. For one thing, in an urban milieu, the Jew was less conspicuous. In manner and dress and language he did not stand out as different from the rest of the city's population as he did in the *shtetl*. The Jew was also in a better position in a city environment if he had made himself needed—as a merchant, banker, hotelier, or impresario, say, of a metropolitan opera or ballet company. The urban Jew might hate and dread the czar as much as his more rural brethren, but if he kept his politics to himself, kept a low profile, conformed with regulations and didn't break any laws, he was tolerated. Czars and revolutions could come and go, and the Jew could get by.

If one was a clever young Jewish woman, too, there was not much to worry about. Young women, after all, were not conscripted into the czarist armies, and if a young woman did not immediately marry but had other plans, there were avenues out of obscurity to great success. By 1920, one such clever young woman had begun to make her presence felt in New York. Her name was Helena Rubinstein.

Her personal *hegira* had been an unusual one. She had been born in Krakow, Poland, around 1878, but it may have been 1873, since Madame Rubinstein was always purposely vague about dates, particularly those dates that would pinpoint her age. In 1898, when she was either twenty or twenty-five, she emigrated from Poland, but not for any of the usual reasons; in fact, the rest of her large family remained behind, without undue difficulties, for a number of years. Her reason for leaving—and here again, we have only her word to go on—was an unhappy romance. She had fallen in love with a young medical student of whom her father disapproved. She was sent to Australia to forget the young man. Why Australia—on the other side of the globe? Because the family had relatives there, she would reply. How had she made the journey? “By boat...” How had her family, who she admitted had been poor, been able to afford the price of the ticket? “Mother sold a trinket!” In her ghostwritten autobiography, *My Life for Beauty*, she typically glossed over all these details, leaving perplexing questions unanswered, but Patrick O’Higgins, who worked for me and with her for fourteen years, and wrote an engaging memoir, *Madame*, about the experience, was able to sift out a few of the facts from the fictional version Madame Rubinstein preferred.

She first landed at Melbourne, and then traveled to a sheep-ranching community some eighty miles distant called Coleraine, where she had an uncle. The uncle’s name was Louis Silberfeld, or Silberfield, as he preferred to spell it, and in her own book Madame Rubinstein describes him variously as a “sheepfarmer,” a “merchant,” and a “landowner.” In fact, O’Higgins discovered, Mr. Silberfield was an oculist, but, assuming that there was not much business for an oculist in a community as small as Coleraine, O’Higgins concludes that he probably ran a general store where he also ground glasses, and, on the side, maintained a flock of sheep, just as most others in the area did. What had brought Mr. Silberfield to Australia is unknown, but it is known that the young Helena Rubinstein disliked him intensely. He, as she put it, “took liberties.”

She disliked Coleraine even more, and in her own book described it: “the sun was strong, the wind violent. The never-ending sweep of pasture, broken here and there by a blue gum tree, presented a very different picture from the one I had imagined.” She terribly missed big-city life. But, in Coleraine, she did spend a few months in an elementary school and learned

rudimentary English. She also, it would seem, made an immediate impression on the local populace, just as the local populace made a strong first impression on her.

She remarked that the Australian women—being from a nation of outdoorspeople and sun worshipers—looked decidedly weatherbeaten. Their skin was cracked, wrinkled, dry, and sunburned. (Throughout her days Helena Rubinstein would be outspokenly opposed to exposure to the sun.) By contrast, the beauty of her own skin drew comment. Of her first Australian days, she wrote, “My new friends could not get over the milky texture of my skin. It was, in fact, no better than the average girl’s in my home town in Poland, but to the ladies of Victoria, with their sun-scorched, wind-burned cheeks, its city-bred alabaster quality seemed remarkable.” Indeed, early photographs of Miss Rubinstein bear her out. She was tiny, only a shade over five feet tall, and her skin, in contrast to her jet-black hair and eyes, did seem to be unusually pale and smooth. Though not technically beautiful, she was certainly a handsome young woman.

The secret of her complexion, she explained, was what she called “Mother’s cream,” implying that it was a facial cream her mother had concocted from an ancient family recipe. It was called “Crème Valaze,” and she had foresightedly packed twelve jars of this splendid lotion in her luggage before leaving Poland. Where did the name “Valaze” come from? The word means nothing in Polish, nor does it—though it sounds as if it might—in French. But admittedly *Valaze* has a velvety, soothing sound, and any clever copywriter might be proud to have thought it up. Helena shared her miraculous cream with certain friends, and they were immediately pleased with the results. There followed a final quarrel with lecherous Uncle Louis, and, more or less simultaneously, as she told it, she had “a vision!” She would leave the sunbaked reaches of Coleraine, head for the big city of Melbourne, and market her Crème Valaze to the women of Australia. Overnight success!

Actually, there are at least six Australian years left unaccounted for in her memoir, between the time she left Uncle Louis and when her first *Maison de Beauté Valaze* appeared in Melbourne’s Collins Street. There is evidence that, during some of this time, she worked as a waitress in a Melbourne boardinghouse. But she did send home for more jars of Crème Valaze, which, it turned out, was not her mother’s recipe at all but was based on a

formula developed by a certain Dr. Lykusky in Poland. And she was also able somehow, between 1898 and 1904, to borrow two hundred pounds, from a woman named Helen Macdonald whom she had met on shipboard, to open her first shop. Her first advertisement, published in Australia in 1904, read, “Mile. Helena Rubinstein of 274 Collins Street announces the launching of Valaze Russian Skin Food by Doctor Lykusky, the celebrated skin specialist.” Within a few months, over nine thousand pounds’ worth of orders poured in. Dr. Lykusky was summoned from Poland, along with two of Helena Rubinstein’s younger sisters, Manka and Ceska, to help her handle the business. She was on her way, and it was not long before stories headlined POLISH GIRL MAKES GOOD IN AUSTRALIA were hitting the newspapers.

Within two years, her advertising copy had changed somewhat. Dr. Lykusky was no longer credited as the inventor of the skin cream, nor was there any mention of its being Russian. Instead, the implication was that Crème Valaze had been created by Mlle Rubinstein. (Dr. Lykusky had either died or been sufficiently paid off.) An advertisement from this period was headlined, WHAT WOMEN WANT! A FEW REMARKS BY HELENA RUBINSTEIN. The copy went on to say, in part, “The healthy woman with an unhealthy or ill-nourished skin is not doing her duty to herself or those nearest her... We cannot all be ladies of Milo, but we can all be the best possible in our individual cases.” The advertisement also included a bit of uplifting doggerel:

*Little blots of blemish
In a visage glad
Make the lover thoughtful
And the husband mad.*

Meanwhile, her Maison de Beauté Valaze had become Maison de Beauté Helena Rubinstein.

This would be her method of operation as her business expanded its marketing from a single cream to a long line of creams, cosmetics, and other beauty products. Though she liked to be photographed in a long white laboratory technician’s gown, mixing together unguents with a mortar and

pestle in what she called her “kitchen,” she had a genius for creating cosmetic collages. Instead, the “First Lady of Beauty Science,” as she later liked to bill herself, often took the creations of others—offering, if they insisted, a small royalty—and marketed them under her own label. As Patrick O’Higgins points out, she was “a masterful adapter”—and merchant—of other people’s ideas.

Which is not to say that she was not responsible for some masterful merchandising innovations. She was the first to decide, for example, that skins could be divided into “types”—“dry,” “oily,” “combination,” and “normal.” That meant four different kinds of cream right there. She also decided that each skin type required at least three different kinds of creams—one for morning, one for daytime (and as a base for makeup), and one for wearing at night. (*Crème Valaze* became her morning, or “Wakeup,” cream.) She also began to see her “vision” expanding on a worldwide scale.

By 1905, she was ready to extend her operations to London, dogged by a man named Edward Titus, who had fallen in love with her, but whom she had not decided to marry. A year later, another *Maison de Beauté* Helena Rubinstein opened in Paris, was an immediate success, and the bright young businesswoman was swept into the glittering prewar world of Misia Sert, Marcel Proust, Jean Cocteau, Gertrude Stein, André Gide, James Joyce, and the painters Pierre Bonnard, Jean Edouard Vuillard, Raoul Dufy, Paul Helleu, and Pablo Picasso, while Poiret and Chanel made dresses for her.

By 1914, worried about the approaching war in Europe—and by now married to Titus, who was an American citizen, and also having somehow managed to give birth to two sons—she was ready to move on to New York, where she was advised that some of the city’s best apartment houses had been built along Central Park West, West End Avenue, and Riverside Drive. She sized up these neighborhoods immediately—“too Jewish”—and settled instead for a brownstone on West Forty-ninth Street. Her family took the top floor, and on the lower two floors she established the first *Maison de Beauté* Helena Rubinstein in the United States.

Following America’s brief experience in World War I, the country was certainly ready for someone with the entrepreneurial skills of a Helena Rubinstein. Prohibition had sparked the country with a sense of gaiety and mischief. Women who would never have dreamed of doing so five years earlier were now sipping cocktails in public. They were also screwing

cigarettes into long lacquered holders and lighting up. Everyone was talking about Sigmund Freud, and sex had come out of the bedroom into the drawing room and speakeasy bar. The dizzy decade of the 1920s, the Era of Wonderful Nonsense, was about to begin, and hemlines were shooting up while necklines were plunging down. Before the war, only “fast” women wore cosmetics, but now every woman under the age of fifty wanted to be thought of as a little fast, and women were painting their lips and eyebrows, rouging their cheeks as well as their knees, glossing their fingernails and toenails, and thanks to Seventh Avenue a woman no longer needed to be rich to be a la mode.

Helena Rubinstein’s first appraisal of American women had been every bit as harsh as that of the Australians. “The first thing I noticed,” she wrote, “was the whiteness of the women’s faces and the oddly grayish color of their lips. Only their noses, mauve with cold, seemed to stand out.” That, of course, was on a January day in 1915 when no New Yorker could have been looking her best, but by the war’s end Helena Rubinstein was ready with a full line of lipsticks, rouges, and powders to relieve the whiteness and the grayness, and the rest of the fashion industry—indeed, the whole entertainment industry, from Broadway to Hollywood—was ready to go along with her.

From the beginning, too—though Helena Rubinstein didn’t care to admit it—her American clientele consisted largely of Jewish women who had made it out of the cocoon of East Side poverty into a new world of fun, freedom, and affluence. Here she was, after all, one of them—a successful Jewish woman proudly waving her unmistakably Jewish name like a banner. Helena Rubinstein had made it out of the ghetto, too. She remembered what it was like. She cared. In her very personal style of advertising—“I, Helena Rubinstein ...”—she told women so. Beauty-conscious Christian women, who shopped at Best’s, De Pinna, and Lord and Taylor, might remain loyal to Elizabeth Arden, who would become Helena Rubinstein’s chief competitor, and whose Blue Grass line suggested horsiness and tweeds. But upscale Jewish women, who shopped at Saks and Bergdorf-Goodman, would for the next generation become devotees of Helena Rubinstein and her mysterious Crème Valaze.* It was because her products sounded so—well, so wonderfully European.

Many of the signposts along the avenue leading out of the ghetto of the Lower East Side into American middle-class prosperity were, of course, addresses. But by the early 1920s, addresses had been codified to the extent that, from one's address, you could almost pinpoint his station in life. In New York, for example, the Upper East Side, from the East Sixties through the low Seventies, was pretty much the domain of Christian rich. Farther north belonged to wealthy German-Jewish bankers: Felix Warburg's Renaissance castle stood at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Ninety-second Street, Otto Kahn's mansion was a block farther down, a few more blocks down lived Adolf Lewisohn and Jacob Schiff, and so on.

The West Side had become heavily Russian Jewish, but of a rather special sort. The big apartments along Central Park West and West End Avenue were expensive and luxurious, but they attracted a somewhat ostentatious group of families—new-rich kings of the garment industry, for example, and a number of underworld kingpins, including Meyer Lansky. These neighborhoods were also favored by show-business people—Broadway producers, agents, theater owners; Jewish performers, composers, writers, set designers, musicians, singers (including Sophie Tucker), and comedians (including Fanny Brice, Eddie Cantor, and Al Jolson). These were all successful people, but they were high rollers, and led the upside-down lives of theater folk. For solid, middle-class respectability and probity, meanwhile, there was no place quite like the Bronx.

It is hard today to imagine that the Bronx was once considered a very proper Jewish address. But, for a Russian-Jewish family in 1920 to have made it all the way to the Bronx—with, perhaps, a way stop in between of a few years in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, which was more working class—was a symbol of having arrived in more ways than one. As early as 1903, a Yiddish writer visiting the Bronx had described it as “a beautiful area ... a suburb that could have sun and air and cheaper rents.... Go take a look,” he urged his readers; “the Bronx is becoming our new ghetto.” A few years later, in 1912, the British novelist Arnold Bennett visited both the East Side and the Bronx, and caught the difference: “In certain strata and streaks of society on the East Side things artistic and intellectual are comprehended with an intensity of emotion impossible to Anglo Saxons.... The Bronx is different. The Bronx is beginning again, at a stage earlier than

art, and beginning better. It is a place for those who have learnt that physical righteousness has got to be the basis for all future progress. It is a place to which the fit will be attracted, and where the fit will survive.”

In other words, the Bronx was a neighborhood for a whole *second* fresh start for the immigrant, and a place to forget, if possible, the hardship of that first fresh start on Hester Street—not a place in which to muster rent strikes and demonstrations, or to haggle with a vendor over the price of whitefish on his cart, but a place to be “righteous,” fit, and seemly, another step toward Americanization, assimilation. And there was another point about the Bronx that Bennett may have missed, which was emotional and psychological: the Bronx is the only borough of New York City’s five that is not situated on an island. In the Russian Jews’ trek to freedom they had been hopping from island to island—from insularity of the European ghetto, to England, to Ellis Island, to lower Manhattan. But when they had made it to the Bronx, they were setting their feet firmly on the soil of the American mainland, for me first time.

Of course, the Bronx comprised a large amount of real estate, and it was not all equally desirable. Moving from east to west, you went from Tiffany Street poverty through neighborhoods that got progressively better until you reached Independence Avenue, and wealth, in Riverdale, where the mayor’s mansion was, and where Toscanini lived. Meanwhile, roughly in the center of the borough, the Speedway Boulevard and Concourse had been renamed Grand Concourse. This splendid eight-lane north-south thoroughfare, completed in 1914, had been laid out by the city planner Louis Risse, whose inspiration the Avenue Champs-Élysées in Paris had been. By the 1920s, the Fordham Road–Grand Concourse intersection had become a great transportation nexus, and the business and social center of the Bronx, with stores, banks, restaurants, and the RKO Fordham Theatre. Farther along Grand Concourse, great apartment houses had gone up, and alongside it lay Joyce Kilmer Park, where mothers could take their children out in strollers and sit on park benches and gossip under the big shade trees.

But the climax of the Grand Concourse was the completion, in 1923, of the Concourse Plaza Hotel, the first hotel in the Bronx and designed as a showplace. Governor Alfred E. Smith spoke at the dedication ceremony, and a borough newspaper called the *Bronx Tabloid* declared that the hotel would “enable the social life of the borough to assemble amid luxurious

surroundings, in keeping with its prestige as the sixth greatest city in the country.” All the important county political dinners were given there, in the glittering ballroom with its gilded balcony railings and huge crystal chandeliers suspended from ceilings twenty-eight feet high. In the dining room, the French chef was partial to elaborate menus that included tournedos Rossini and—daringly, for a Jewish neighborhood—lobster thermidor, though most of the residents of the Grand Concourse were second-generation Jews who had abandoned the strictures of their parents’ Orthodoxy.

The hotel’s lobby and public rooms were favorite gathering places for stars of the New York Yankees, from Yankee Stadium just three blocks away, as well as for Bronx politicians and businessmen and their wives. Every Bronx Jewish girl dreamed of being married at the Concourse Plaza with the best wedding that money could buy, and Jewish mothers promised their little boys that, if they were good, that was where their bar mitzvah parties would take place. By the 1920s, the Jewish families who lived along the Grand Concourse had nothing in common with West End Avenue families in the fashion and entertainment industries, who led more here-today-gone-tomorrow lives. Instead, these were solid, white-collar Jewish professionals—doctors, lawyers, dentists, accountants, educators, druggists, and civil servants: a new Russian-Jewish American bourgeoisie.

Many of these men were graduates of New York’s City College. During the early 1900s, City College had provided another avenue of escape from the Lower East Side—but that it had done so was a matter involving many contradictions and anomalies. For one thing, City College was not located anywhere near what could be called a “Jewish neighborhood.” It was not in Brooklyn or the Bronx, or on the West Side. It was at the corner of Lexington Avenue and Twenty-third Street, near fashionable Gramercy Park, and, even on the new subways, it was not exactly an easy commute uptown from Rivington or Grand streets. City College had not set out to be a Jewish college. Nor had its original intent been to Americanize or homogenize the foreign-born. Two successive presidents, Horace Webster and Alexander Webb, were not only Christians but ex-West Pointers, from a day when West Point was not at all hospitable to Jews. Webster and Webb, furthermore, had established a tradition of running the school in a

paramilitary manner, a fact that young immigrants from police-run states should have found repellent.

In many ways, City College took a hostile stance toward Jewish students. For example, Jews were originally barred from its fraternities, a fact that would forever incense Bernard Baruch, a City College alumnus of 1889. And so it is hard to say why or how City College managed to earn the deep affection, the almost passionate loyalty of Jewish immigrants. Yet, it did. For a Jewish mother, to be able to say that her son was studying at City College was to wear a badge of tremendous pride. To young immigrants themselves, by the early 1900s, City College had become a shining symbol—as one alumnus put it, “a passport to a higher and ennobled life.” The passions that City College stirred in the breasts of its alumni were almost like a parent’s devotion to a seriously handicapped child.

Its teachers were, for the most part, mediocre. Its physical plant was in no way beautiful or inspiring. Its exterior was shabby, its interiors dark and grim, its plumbing primitive, its desks and chairs rickety and splayed, its library ill kept and out-of-date. On top of everything else, City College was not even a real college, but more like a combination of high school and college. If, for instance, a boy had completed grammar school, he could take a City College entrance examination, and if he achieved a passing grade of 70, he could be admitted as a “sub-freshman.” Then, during his sub-freshman year, he was expected to cram four years’ worth of high school study into a single year. Similarly, if he had completed one year of high school, he could also apply for sub-freshmanship, and if his exam grades were good enough, he might actually be admitted to a freshman class. Naturally, this system meant a high degree of turnover among the student body, and whereas hundreds of young men had started City College as freshmen and sub-freshmen, only two or three dozen remained in the graduating class four or five years later. The graduating class of 1906 was typical. One hundred and forty men graduated that year. Over a thousand had entered as freshmen and sub-freshmen four or five years earlier. This steep rate of attrition also meant that competition to succeed was particularly fierce. City College was a survival course. Perhaps that was why the school stirred such fervent loyalties among those relatively few youths who actually made it through, and why it conferred upon its graduates the almost mystical belief that they were members of a privileged

and special Elect. It was not the school or its teaching staff that inspired its Jewish students. It was the students who inspired themselves.

In the 1880s and 1890s, only a tiny handful of Russian-Jewish boys joined the few German-Jewish students enrolled at City College. But as the new century progressed, the word of the challenge of City College began to spread. By 1903, more than seventy-five percent of the students at City College were Jewish, most of them the sons of Russian immigrants, and in the graduating class of 1910, of the 112 graduates, at least 90 were Jewish. Finally, after the First World War, with Jewish soldiers who had seen a bit of the world returning home determined to make more of their lives than their parents had, and with tuition loans available, City College became a virtually all-Jewish school. By then, of course, the restrictive clauses against Jews in fraternities had become meaningless.

By then, too, the academic standards of City College, and the quality of education it delivered, had improved dramatically. It was not quite Harvard or Columbia, perhaps, but it was close. And it was all thanks, probably, not so much to the efforts of its administration or its faculty as to the zeal and ardor of its students themselves, and their determination to educate themselves into the mainstream of America.

*Max Fisher is no kin to the (Christian) Fishers of Fisher Body, after whom the freeway, street, and building are named. But he doesn't mind the coincidence.

*Patrick O'Higgins once asked Madame Rubinstein what went into her Crème Valaze. She waxed rhapsodic and replied, "It's made of a wonderful mixture of rare herbs, the essence of Oriental almonds, extracts from the bark of an evergreen tree ...". Later, he stumbled on the formula, but could not find any of these exotic ingredients listed. Instead, there were commonplace materials such as ceresin wax (a petroleum derivative used as a substitute for beeswax), mineral oil, and sesame.

8

MINSTRELS AND MINSTRELSY

In 1919, Irving Berlin had made a decision that would make him a millionaire, even though, at thirty-one, he was already a very prosperous young man. He had walked out the door of the music-publishing house that employed him, and for which he had been composing popular songs at an alarming rate—and being paid a small royalty based on sales of the sheet music—never to come back. Instead, he intended to form his own music-publishing firm, Irving Berlin, Inc., to market his own songs.

The lore of songwriting is full of bitter tales of composers who wrote enormously popular songs—even minor classics—but who, having sold their rights to them for a pittance, died poor and were buried in potter's field. John Philip Sousa, for example, was supposedly paid only ninety dollars for "Stars and Stripes Forever." For "When You Were Sweet Sixteen," Jimmy Thornton was paid thirty-five dollars. And such old favorites as "The Stories That Mother Told Me" came from the days when Harry Von Tilzer and Andy Sterling were peddling their songs around Union Square for two to five dollars apiece.

But the music world also has more inspiring stories, such as that of Mrs. Carrie Jacobs Bond, a plucky Chicago housewife, whose husband's sudden death left her a widow with a young son to support. Her son got a job selling newspapers, and Mrs. Bond, who had always considered herself vaguely musical, thought she'd try her hand at writing songs. She wrote song after song, submitted her compositions to publisher after publisher, and they were all uniformly rejected. Finally, she decided to publish them herself, and with two hundred dollars borrowed from a friend and three hundred dollars scraped together from her own savings, she set about to do

the job from her kitchen table. As it happened, one of the songs she was working on at the time was a wistful, sentimental ballad called “The End of a Perfect Day.” While trying to get that song into the marketplace, she ran short of cash to pay her printer, but was able to borrow an additional fifteen hundred dollars from her doctor, who lived down the street, promising to pay him a share of the profits, if any. “The End of a Perfect Day” became one of the best-selling songs of all time, and in its first fifteen years sold an unprecedented five million copies, by which time her doctor alone had made more than a hundred thousand dollars on his investment. The song has been sung at weddings and at funerals, by church choirs and on the concert stage, has been translated and recorded in every language, including Urdu. It still sells briskly, and earns its composer’s estate a tidy annual sum. It was the Carrie Jacobs Bond route that Irving Berlin decided to follow.

He had been born Isidore Baline in 1888 in a Russian village called Temum, which no longer exists, the youngest of eight children. Since he was only four when his family emigrated to America, he had no clear memories of the old country except one: lying on a blanket beside a road and watching his house, along with the rest of the town, burn to the ground. Of the family exodus to America that followed, he retained no memory at all.

Perhaps because he was the youngest of such a large brood, he was a rather solitary, introspective child. Rather than being the most babied of the family, he seems to have been the one most overlooked by his busy mother. He was desultory in his school work, and not even City College held out any lure for him. He did, however, learn to swim the traditional way—by being tossed into the East River by some older Irish youths—and actually became so adept at it that he perfected a little trick. In the impromptu swimming pools that had been created out of disused East Side docks, children were allowed to swim in groups of fifty or so for fifteen minutes. Then a lifeguard blew his whistle, whereupon all swimmers had to get out of the pool to make room for the next group. Isidore Baline, however, developed a tactic whereby, at the sound of the whistle, he would submerge himself and remain underwater until the next group had entered the pool—a matter of three or four minutes. Then he would surface and continue his swim undetected. He became such a good swimmer that he once swam all the way to Brooklyn and back. His only other talent, as a boy, seemed to be

singing: he possessed a sweet soprano voice, and he liked to sing. His idol became George M. Cohan, whom every Jewish boy of the era simply assumed was a Jewish composer and performer.

At the age of fourteen, and for no particular reason, Izzy Baline ran away from home. He was apparently not very much missed, because he did not run far—only a few blocks away, to the Bowery. The Bowery, in those days, did not have the skid-row aura it emanates today. In fact, it was almost glamorous. It was the Broadway of the Lower East Side, crammed with bars, restaurants, and nightclubs that offered vaudeville-style entertainment. It was an era when “slumming” was a popular diversion for uptowners, when debutantes and their escorts dressed in their shabbiest clothes and came down to the Bowery for a taste of how the other half lived, and for the thrill of rubbing shoulders with gamblers, gangsters, and other East Side lowlifes. From the slummers and from their regular neighborhood customers, the bars of the Bowery did a thriving business. Izzy Baline decided he could earn a living as a “busker” in the Bowery bars.

Buskers were free-lance entertainers who cruised from bar to bar, singing songs, or dancing, or performing comedy routines, then passing the hat for pennies among the customers. On a good night, a busker could earn as much as a dollar, which, in a neighborhood where a steak pie cost a nickel and a room in a boardinghouse cost a quarter a night, was enough to provide him with food and shelter and even a bit of pin money. For a while, Baline worked as a kind of Seeing Eye dog for a blind busker known as Blind Sol. He led Blind Sol on his singing rounds of the bars, sometimes joining him in a duet, and was paid with a share of Blind Sol’s take. For a brief period, too, he sang—for five dollars a week—with an itinerant vaudeville troupe that billed itself as THREE—KEATONS—THREE. There was Ma Keaton, who played the saxophone. Pa Keaton did a comedy routine, and their baby, Buster Keaton, was a comic prop who got laughs by being tossed back and forth across the stage by his parents.

In terms of his later career, however, Izzy Baline’s most important employment occurred when he was hired as a singing waiter in a bar called the Pelham Café on Pell Street, in the heart of Chinatown. The Pelham Café had a perfectly dreadful reputation. To begin with, Chinatown, full of “sinister Oriental types,” opium dens, and tong wars, was considered one of the most dangerous areas in the city, where police were always breaking up

dope rings and trying to solve the periodic clueless throat-slittings. At the center of all this unlovely activity stood the Pelham Café, which was known far and wide not by its official name but by the even unlovelier sobriquet of Nigger Mike's. Nigger Mike's was said to be the favored hangout of all the most notorious criminals and the most flamboyant and popular prostitutes. In Nigger Mike's back room, it was said, illegal gambling, opium smoking, and Lord knew what else went on. It was the unsavory reputation of Nigger Mike's, and of its alleged "back room" (which, in fact, did not exist), that had made it one of the most sought-after slumming places in town. Naturally, "Nigger Mike" Salter, who ran the place, did nothing to discourage his establishment's expanding ill repute. And Mike Salter, meanwhile, was not a black at all, but a Russian Jew whose swarthy complexion had earned him the nickname—one he didn't mind at all. If anything, it enhanced his saloon's shady image, which was its chief drawing card.

The songs that Izzy Baline sang while working as a singing waiter at Nigger Mike's were a pastiche. Like Helena Rubinstein, he was proving himself to be a masterful adapter. Some were simply the popular songs of the day—"Dear Old Girl," "Ida, Sweet as Apple Cider," and "Sweet Adeline." But then, for variety, he sometimes added new and slightly off-color lyrics to well-known favorites, and he also offered a few tunes that he had simply composed in his head. At Nigger Mike's there was a battered upright piano, and in his off hours, he laboriously picked out these new songs on the keyboard, though, unable to read or write music, he had no idea how to transcribe his tunes to make musical manuscripts. In fact, he never really did master the piano. Years later, after Irving Berlin had become one of the most popular composers in America, it was something of a shock to strangers to discover that he could play in only one key—F sharp—and had never learned to read music, or to transcribe it.

It was while singing at Nigger Mike's, meanwhile, that Izzy Baline had his first brush with fame. Prince Louis of Battenberg was visiting New York and, it seemed, the notoriety of Nigger Mike's saloon had traveled as far as Europe. One of the sights the prince wanted to see in the city was the famous Chinatown café. Nigger Mike himself was not at all sure how to deal with such an illustrious customer, and when the prince and his party arrived he announced that drinks would be on the house. When the prince

was ready to leave, he thanked his host, and then offered a tip to his singing waiter. Baline, thinking that he too must appear as hospitable as his boss, politely refused the tip. A reporter named Herbert Bayard Swope—later to become the editor of the New York *World*—who was covering Prince Louis’s visit, decided that here was an amusing story: an immigrant Jewish waiter who would refuse a tip from a visiting German prince. Thus the name of Izzy Baline found itself in the papers the following morning.

This bit of extra publicity for his establishment, however, did nothing to endear Izzy Baline to Nigger Mike, who, when he was drunk, had a terrible temper. Some nights later, when Baline’s job was to watch the cash register, he nodded off over the half-opened drawer. Nigger Mike found him that way, and summarily fired him.

But he had no trouble finding another job, and he was presently doing his song and parody routines at another bar, called Jimmy Kelly’s, on Union Square. In appearance, it was not much different from Nigger Mike’s, but it was at a slightly better address and attracted a slightly higher-class clientele. It was here, with a pianist friend named Nick Nicholson, who knew someone who could put notes on music paper, that Izzy Baline wrote a song called “Marie from Sunny Italy,” which the two decided was good enough to try to get published. They took their composition to the music publisher Joseph Stern, who promptly accepted it. The song became mildly popular in the music halls of 1907. The lyric writer’s revenue from it was thirty-seven cents, and when the sheet music first appeared it bore the legend “Words by I. Berlin.”

Just how Baline became transformed into Berlin would always be something of a mystery, even to the composer himself. It may have been the careless publisher’s error. Or it may have been Baline’s own fault, since, as he would admit, in the Yiddish-accented speech of the Lower East Side his name came out sounding like “Berlin.” Later, when the modest “I. Berlin” became Irving Berlin, it was Berlin’s own doing. He decided that both Isidore and Israel, his Hebrew name, sounded “too foreign.” Irving sounded “more American.” In any case, Joseph Stern capitalized on the new name, touting Berlin’s first song as “about an Italian girl, written by a Russian boy, named after a German city.”

Two more not very distinguished songs followed “Marie”—“Queenie, My Own,” written with an itinerant pianist at Jimmy Kelly’s, and “The Best

of Friends Must Part,” which Berlin wrote alone. But it was with a humorous bit of verse called “Dorando” that Irving Berlin came—almost accidentally—uptown to Tin Pan Alley, as the neighborhood around West Thirty-ninth Street and Broadway was known, where the big-time music publishers had their offices. “Dorando” had been commissioned—for ten dollars—by a song-and-dance man at Kelly’s who wanted to do a comic routine, in an Italian accent, about an Italian marathon runner named Dorando, who had just lost to an American Indian named Longboat. Berlin’s verse was about an Italian barber who had wagered his life’s savings on Dorando and, of course, had lost. But the song-and-dance man defaulted on the deal and refused to pay for the routine, whereupon Berlin took his words uptown to the offices of the then legendary publisher Ted Snyder.

For some reason, he was admitted immediately into the great man’s office, though he did not even have an appointment, and recited his verse. “Well,” Snyder said, after hearing it, “I suppose you’ve got a tune to this.” In fact, Berlin did not, but he quickly lied, and said, “Yes.” Snyder then waved him down the hall to his music-arranger’s office, with instructions that Berlin was to sing his tune for the arranger. Somehow, between Snyder’s office and the arranger’s, Berlin managed to compose some notes in his head to go with the words, and a full-scale song was born.

For the next three years, most of Irving Berlin’s output was in collaboration with Snyder or one of his stable of composers. Although some forty-five new Berlin songs appeared during this period, none is particularly memorable today, even though many—such as “Yiddisha Eyes”—were popular music hall favorites of the day. For his work with the Snyder office, Berlin was paid a comfortable—for 1910—salary of twenty-five dollars a week, plus a royalty on sheet-music sales of each new title. But it was not until 1911, when he began writing his own music and lyrics without resorting to collaborators, that he began to come into his own. His first big hit that year was “Alexander’s Ragtime Band,” a song that would remain popular for years and that seemed to provide a glorious overture to the Jazz Age that was to follow. He was only twenty-three.

Irving Berlin songs began to appear that are still sung in college dormitories, nightclubs, beer halls, and on concert stages all over the country—“I Want to Go Back to Michigan,” “Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in

the Morning,” “He’s a Rag Picker,” “A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody”—now mandatory background music for every Miss America Pageant—and on and on. Which came first, the lyric or the tune? It could happen either way. The genesis of “I Want to Go Back to Michigan” was simply that Berlin had been playing around, in his head, with the couplet “Oh, how I wish again/That I was in Michigan.” It was a place, incidentally, that he had never visited when he wrote the song in 1917.

Music theorists and historians have tried to parse and analyze the music of Irving Berlin, searching for forms and early influences that might have shaped his talent. This is not an easy chore because, in addition to his prodigious output, the variety of Berlin’s modes and moods is remarkable. He wrote simple love songs (“What’ll I Do”), and he wrote ragtime romps (“Everybody’s Doin’ It”). He wrote sentimental ballads (“I Lost My Heart at the Stagedoor Canteen”) and patriotic marches (“This Is the Army, Mr. Jones”). He wrote sad songs, funny songs, high-stepping jazz songs, and romantic waltzes. Theorists have claimed to hear strains of other cultures in Berlin’s music—echoes of Negro spirituals, for instance, which is interesting, since Berlin had almost no familiarity with the genre. Others have sensed a relationship between Berlin’s music and old Yiddish folk songs, Hasidic chants, and even ancient Sephardic liturgical music from the synagogues of fourteenth-century Spain—all unlikely sources of his inspirations.

Perhaps, again, the best way to see Irving Berlin’s music is as pastiche—a piecing together of this and that, of everything that went into the experience of the American melting pot. Many of his songs had Jewish themes, but he also wrote songs with Italian themes, French themes, German themes, Irish themes, Spanish themes, and blackface and American Indian themes. One could not label as a “Jewish” composer the man who celebrated America’s principal Christian holidays with “White Christmas” and “Easter Parade,” and who celebrated America itself with “God Bless America,” a hymn so popular that it has become virtually a second national anthem—to the point where many Americans believe it *is* the national anthem. Just as America itself has become, if not a melting pot exactly, a tossed salad of ethnic influences and traditions, so is the collective oeuvre of Irving Berlin a tossed salad. And so deeply entrenched in the American idiom are his songs that they don’t translate well into foreign tongues. Even

in England, audiences have had difficulty understanding Berlin's songs—"What'll I Do," for instance, puzzled the British, who wondered at the meaning of the word "whattle." As for Berlin's style, "American" is the best adjective for it. His contemporary and chief competitor in the songwriting field, George Gershwin, called him "America's Franz Schubert," but that falls somewhat wide of the mark. Harold Arlen once said that Berlin's songs "sound as though they were born that way—God Almighty!—not written!" And asked to define Irving Berlin's place in American music, Jerome Kern replied, "Irving Berlin has *no* place in American music. He *is* American music." And the wonder of it all is that he was born in Russia.

When he left Ted Snyder's firm to form his own Irving Berlin, Inc., he was not only making a move that would make him a very rich man; he was also moving into the mainstream of the American free-enterprise system, and fulfilling every American's dream of becoming his own boss.

Meanwhile, throughout the 1920s, new Russian-Jewish names and faces were emerging by the score in the American entertainment business—singers, actors, comics, composers, lyricists, and dancers. Their names are legion—Theda Bara (Theodosia Goodman), Jack Benny (Benjamin Kubelsky), Fanny Brice (Fanny Borach), Harry Houdini (Ehrich Weiss), Al Jolson (Asa Yoelson), Sophie Tucker (Sonia Kalish), George Burns (Nathan Bimbaum), Eddie Cantor (Isidor Iskowitch), and Libby Holman (Catherine Holzman) are only the beginning of a long, imposing list of folk who turned their talents, in one form or another, to the performing arts. Why this headlong rush of Eastern European Jews into show business? It is a little difficult to explain.

To begin with—considering the craving of most Jewish immigrants for solid American "respectability," for the Grand Concourse via City College—was the fact that show business was considered in no way a respectable American calling. Performers and other theater folk occupied a position on the status ladder just a short step above prostitutes and pimps. Furthermore, if the entertainment business was looked on as a low calling by most self-respecting Americans it was regarded as an even lower calling by most right-thinking and pious Jews. Rabbis inveighed against the theater as a

form of idol worship, and the Hebrew phrase *moshav letzim*, meaning “the seat of the scornful,” was often used in Russia as a synonym for the theater, while the first Psalm warned, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” The word *letz*, or “scorner,” was often used to describe an actor.

To be sure, there was the tradition of the Yiddish theater to be considered. At the same time, while the Yiddish theater was enjoyed as spectacle, those connected with its performances were held in low esteem, and though Yiddish theater was transported to the Lower East Side, it can in no way account for the enormous outpouring of show-business talent that emerged from Jewish immigrants in the United States. In Russia, there had also been the tradition of the *badchen*, or street jester, juggler, or fiddle player—but the *badchen* was also a figure of scorn and ridicule, little better than a beggar, an organ-grinder with his monkey, a blind man with his cup. And yet, as a singing waiter, Irving Berlin had been an American *badchen*, just as Eddie Cantor—singing and telling jokes and doing imitations at weddings and bar mitzvahs—had thereby launched himself as a comedian.

Still, this does not satisfactorily explain the phenomenon of American Jews in show business. One can, of course, assume that part of the explanation was the fact that, once the Jews were freed from the shackles of poverty and discrimination, great wells of talent that had been forced into hiding in the old country became uncapped in the new, and that with this came a longing for more than respectability—for achievement, recognition, and fame; the name in lights on Broadway, the cheers and applause of an audience. But sheer ambition does not invariably lead to fame, nor is it necessarily an accompaniment to theatrical talent.

It is true, however, that by the 1920s much of the business end of show business was in Jewish hands. Many of the legendary producers and impresarios on Broadway, such as Billy Rose (William Rosenberg) and Florenz Ziegfeld, were Jewish. So were many of the theatrical agents. The theaters themselves, meanwhile, were in the hands of the formidable brothers Shubert—Sam, Lee, and Jacob—the sons of an immigrant Syracuse peddler, who by the 1920s were to Broadway showplaces what the Rockefellers were to Standard Oil. All this helped Jewish performers find employment without fear of anti-Semitism, and among the careers launched

by Flo Ziegfeld were those of Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor, and Fanny Brice. Then there was the fact that, by 1920, much of the Prohibition liquor trade was in Jewish hands, and a good number of the speakeasies and nightclubs where would-be stars could do their turns were also Jewish-owned. But still, where did so much *talent* come from? How to account for the wonderful songs—that seemed not to be written, but simply to “happen”—from the musically untutored Irving Berlin?

Much of the answer may lie in the streets of the Lower East Side themselves, where a bit of theatrical talent—or a plucky stab at it—could be a means of survival. More than gumption and street wisdom were required of a Jewish child to make it through the average day of taunting and bullying, and an ability to improvise was often helpful. If a Jewish youth were slightly built and not particularly athletic (like Irving Berlin), a potential tormentor could often be as diverted by a soft-shoe shuffle, a bit of clever mimicry, a comedy routine, or a song as by the use of fists. Once diverted by the young performer, the tormentor found himself disarmed and going along with the joke. The explosion of talent that erupted from the Lower East Side in the 1920s very likely grew out of the art of self-defense.

Having found that he could hold an audience, the young performer discovered that he could sell his ability for pennies in the street, or in the shabby saloons along the Bowery, or in the speakeasies of Brooklyn and Harlem. From there, the next step might be an engagement at one of the increasingly lavish resort hotels, such as Grossinger’s and the Concord in the Borscht Belt of the Catskills. Here, vacationing Jewish families demanded entertainment of all varieties when not sunning themselves in lawn chairs, eating sumptuous meals, and admiring mountain scenery. Here, Meyer Lansky would establish several pleasant, and illegal, gambling parlors, and here budding comics, singers, and actors would hone their techniques and develop new routines. At one of these hotels, a young comedian named David Daniel Kominski, the son of a Russian-born Brooklyn tailor, later to be known as Danny Kaye, was hired to do zany acts in the lobby on rainy days to prevent guests from checking out. These Jewish performers, furthermore, were playing for Jewish audiences and were delighting them with a kind of Jewish self-parody that a generation later might have raised eyebrows. Fanny Brice, for example, did her acts in a heavy Yiddish accent—full of “oys!” and “Oy vehs!”—which she actually

had to teach herself, since hers had not been a Yiddish-speaking family. Danny Kaye's comedy relied heavily on mocking Russian-Jewish mannerisms and shibboleths and speech patterns—a takeoff on a newly rich Jewish businessman with an unpronounceable name was a particular favorite—and the Marx Brothers had a routine called “Misfit Sam the Tailor.” Sophie Tucker, meanwhile, could always bring the house down by closing her act with a rendition of “My Yiddishe Mama.” It was at the Catskill resorts that producers and agents were scouting for fresh talent, and, for the performer, the next step might be the vaudeville circuit, or Broadway, or Hollywood.

In Hollywood, however, the situation for the Jewish performer was somewhat different from what it was in the Catskills or even in New York. Though the motion picture business—led by men like Goldwyn, Louis B. Mayer, William Fox, Adolph Zukor, Marcus Loew, and the brothers Warner—had become a heavily Jewish industry, its national audience was not. Jewish jokes and Jewish themes might be popular in the Borscht Belt or even on Broadway, but Hollywood, with its eye ever on the largest possible box-office receipts, made carefully de-Semitized films for the Christian majority. During the 1920s and even into the 1930s, it was unlikely that a Jewish actor would be cast as a romantic lead unless, like John Garfield (Julius Garfinkle), he happened not to “look Jewish.” Part of this had to do with Hollywood's preoccupation, during this period, with turning out Westerns, and it was assumed that a Jewish face or physique would appear incongruous dressed in a cowboy outfit. But there was also genuine business fear that Christian audiences would not react kindly to Jewish stars. Theda Bara's Jewishness was a closely guarded secret, as was the fact that Douglas Fairbanks's mother had been Jewish. There was a great deal of elaborate name-changing, in the course of which Irving Lahrheim became Bert Lahr, Emmanuel Goldberg became Edward G. Robinson, Pauline Levee became Paulette Goddard, and so on. One of the most ingenious of these changes was made when an actor named Lee Jacob became Lee J. Cobb. The euphemism used in studio casting offices was “Mediterranean type,” and if an actor was branded a Mediterranean type he usually found good roles in the movies hard to come by. Both Rudolph Valentino and Clark Gable had, in the early stages of their careers, difficulty getting parts because they “looked Mediterranean,” though neither was Jewish.

The one area of films where an actor could get away with being Jewish, or looking Jewish, or where one could pretend to be Jewish even if one was not—where it was even an advantage to be Jewish—was comedy, and so it is no coincidence that some of the greatest comedians in the world—Eddie Cantor, Jack Benny, Fanny Brice, the Marx Brothers—have been Jews nourished to prominence by Hollywood. For years, it was assumed that the greatest movie comedian of them all, Charlie Chaplin, was Jewish. He had to be, because he was so funny. He went to his grave, however, heatedly denying the rumors.

But it is an interesting comment on the timidity and insecurity of Hollywood's Jewish moguls who, by the 1920s, had become the most powerful purveyors of mass culture in America—a comment, perhaps, on their own ethnic embarrassment or even downright shame—that the only way a Jew could be a Jew on the screen was to play a tramp, a clown, a grifter, or a *nebbish*.

And yet, it had to be admitted, playing the *nebbish* had helped many a bright young Jew make it through the Lower East Side, out of it, and onto a theater marquee.

9

HIGH ROLLERS

One of Sam Goldwyn's gifts as a filmmaker was his genius at generating publicity. Though he personally oversaw every detail of the movies he produced—from the writing and editing to the actresses' hairstyles and makeup—the part of his job he relished most was getting his name, his studio's name, his stars' names, and his pictures' names in the papers. One of the great social events of the Prohibition era was the wedding, in 1927, of one of Goldwyn's stars, Vilma Banky, and Rod La Rocque, an actor under contract to Cecil B. DeMille. The affair was almost entirely staged—and was completely paid for—by Goldwyn. He had discovered Miss Banky on a trip to Budapest, and after getting her to trim down by some twenty pounds and having her teeth capped, Goldwyn brought her to Hollywood to make her a star. (It mattered not, in those days of silents, that she spoke not a word of English.) In the process, Goldwyn had created the myth that she was a “Hungarian countess”—though in fact he had met her getting off a streetcar.

There were many prenuptial showers for the bogus countess, all paid for by Goldwyn, and he had hired the pastor to perform the rites and had selected the Church of the Good Shepherd, the most fashionable Catholic church in Los Angeles. He paid for a fifty-voice choir to sing at the church, selected and paid for the bride's wedding gown, and offered her a veil borrowed from his studio's wardrobe department (Miss Banky had worn it in *The Dark Angel*). Goldwyn had chosen the bridesmaids for their newsworthiness, and they included Mildred Lloyd, Norma and Constance Talmadge, Norma Shearer, Marion Davies, and Dolores Del Rio. Louella Parsons, Hollywood's most powerful press figure, was matron of honor.

Tom Mix arrived at the wedding wearing a purple cowboy costume and purple ten-gallon hat, driven in a purple coach-and-four with footmen in purple livery, and nearly stole the show. When everyone had settled in the church, and the Wedding March was struck up, there was no bride. She finally appeared, fifteen minutes late, as Goldwyn had instructed her to be, for added suspense and drama.

Following the ceremony, Goldwyn put on a huge wedding breakfast and reception, and, throughout it, kept nervously asking everyone in sight, “Is Sunday a legal day? Is Sunday a legal day?” No one knew what he was talking about, but Goldwyn did have some reason for concern, though it had nothing to do with the legality of Miss Banky’s marriage to La Rocque. It seemed that La Rocque was involved in an ugly lawsuit over his contract with DeMille, though Goldwyn had chosen DeMille to be La Rocque’s best man. It had occurred to Goldwyn that this somewhat unusual arrangement might have been seen, by lawyers, as some sort of collusion between the two parties to the lawsuit. He need not have worried because, as it turned out, Sunday was *not* a legal day.

Much champagne was consumed at the reception, and only when the guests felt it was time to turn to the food—huge hams, turkeys, and standing rib roasts of beef had been spread out on a long table—did they discover that all the viands were plaster of pans imitations, borrowed from the Goldwyn prop department. Not a morsel of the nuptial repast was edible. When it was time for the bride and groom to depart, and the new Mrs. La Rocque tossed her bridal bouquet, it was caught, by prearrangement, by Norma Shearer. This was because she was to be married later that year in another wedding that would be much publicized—to Irving Thalberg, production head of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

During its early years, Goldwyn’s company had prospered from a number of now almost forgotten hit films. Goldwyn had hired the beautiful opera star Geraldine Farrar to make *The Turn of the Wheel*, and she had gone on to make a series of lightweight romances for him. From Oklahoma, Goldwyn had brought an offbeat, crooked-grinned comedian named Will Rogers, and introduced him in a movie called *Laughing Bill Hyde*. When the pretty daughter of an Alabama congressman won a beauty contest, Goldwyn put her under contract and starred her in something called *Thirty a Week*. Her uncommon name was Tallulah Bankhead. For writers, Goldwyn

hired such big names of the day as Mary Roberts Rinehart, Rex Beach, Gertrude Atherton, and Rupert Hughes.

In the beginning, financing his films had been a problem, as it was with other Jewish producers, and each new film was paid for out of the earnings of the last, which meant that each film was another roll of the dice. The big commercial banks in the East had little interest in the fledgling motion picture business. It was considered much too risk-ridden and, too, there was an element of snobbishness and anti-Semitism here. Nearly all the eastern banks were controlled by wealthy Protestants, bound together into a fraternity with old-school Ivy League college ties. By unspoken gentlemanly agreement, they refrained from involving themselves with Jewish enterprises. In California, however, Sam Goldwyn had found an exception in the person of an Italian Catholic banker named Amadeo Peter Giannini. Mr. Giannini had formed his Bank of Italy—later the Bank of America—in 1904 with the express purpose of offering loans to small farmers and businessmen, particularly Italian immigrants, who had similar difficulty borrowing money from such older established California banks as the Crocker, Anglo, and Wells Fargo. Giannini had flown in the face of banking tradition and orthodoxy by actively soliciting loan customers, instead of the other way around, and his bank had become the popular bank “of the little man.” With A. P. Giannini, Sam Goldwyn found a sympathetic reception, and soon Goldwyn’s pictures were being produced in financial partnership with Giannini’s bank.

Shortly after the war, however, the film industry went into what would be one of its periodic slumps, and Goldwyn’s company got into serious trouble. He had temporarily exhausted his borrowing power at the Bank of Italy, and a new source of working capital had to be found. This was why, when Goldwyn’s friends Lee and J. J. Shubert, the Broadway theater owners, told him of a man the Shuberts claimed had an uncanny knack for making money, Sam was immediately interested, and asked that the fellow be brought around. The name of this alleged financial genius was Frank Joseph Godsol, and upon meeting him, Goldwyn immediately brought Godsol in as a partner. Uncharacteristically—so pressing was his need for ready cash—Goldwyn made no attempt to investigate Mr. Godsol’s background. In view of what was to happen, one cannot help wondering if Sam had been taken in by a Shubert brothers scheme to ruin him, even

though he considered the brothers his friends. The Shuberts were not his competitors, exactly, but at the same time the popularity of movies was having its effect on the box-office receipts at legitimate Broadway theaters, on which the Shuberts had a virtual monopoly. What interest could the Shuberts possibly have had in helping out a financially troubled movie producer? And if Frank Joseph Godsol was such a financial wizard, why hadn't the wily Shuberts snapped him up for their own organization? Beyond the vague claim that Godsol had a talent for making money grow on trees, the Shuberts appeared not to have looked into Godsol's credentials, either.

Joe Godsol was tall, dark-haired, suavely handsome, and athletic. He had a courtly continental manner and style of speech acquired, he claimed, from having swum in the perfumed waters of the highest society in Europe. He casually dropped the names of dukes and countesses of his acquaintance. He appeared to be, in other words, exactly the kind of grand seigneur that Goldwyn himself aspired to be. In fact, he seemed almost too good to be true, but Hollywood and Goldwyn quickly clasped Joe Godsol to their respective bosoms.

Actually, if Goldwyn had checked into Mr. Godsol's past a bit, he would have uncovered a somewhat different story. Godsol was not a European at all, but had been born in Cleveland, Ohio, the son of a tailor. He had made his way to Europe, where he had enjoyed a career as an elegant swindler and con man. His first major brush with the law had occurred in 1905, when he had been brought up before the Paris Commercial Tribunal for selling cheap imitation pearls as the real thing. At the time, the press had labeled Godsol "the most colossal fake in the history of jewelry." From then on, he was in and out of trouble and in and out of jail. During the war, as a French army officer, he was arrested for embezzling funds from the French government by tinkering with military payroll records. He had been discharged, and ordered to leave France. Still, shortly after the war, Joe Godsol found himself vice-president of the Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.

It was perhaps not surprising, then, that the money Godsol had promised to bring into the company did not immediately materialize. Godsol, however, had connections from his colorful international days who were not aware of his shady past, and among these were members of Wilmington's wealthy du Pont clan. With Godsol providing the entrée, Sam Goldwyn was

introduced to two of the multitudinous du Pont cousins, Henry F. and Eugene E. du Pont. Together, Goldwyn and Godsol were able to convince the du Ponts that movies were making everyone connected with them rich, that to invest in a motion picture company meant the possibility of hobnobbing with beautiful actresses and famous writers and artists, and that filmmaking was more glamorous than munitions-making. The result was an infusion of three million dollars of du Pont money into the Goldwyn company. With their investment, both du Ponts, along with Mr. E. V. R. Thayer of the Chase National Bank, moved onto Sam Goldwyn's board of directors. Soon they were joined by yet another member of the Delaware family, T. Coleman du Pont. All seemed well. It seemed, furthermore, that the film industry was at last moving up in the world. No longer associated with immigrant furriers and glove salesmen, it had apparently been given the imprimatur of the eastern business establishment.

Within months, however, disaster again loomed on the horizon. The industry itself remained depressed, and Goldwyn pictures were doing particularly poor business at the box office. The du Ponts were now having a taste of the less glamorous side of the movie business, and were nervously wondering what had become of their three-million-dollar investment, on which no return seemed to be forthcoming. Meetings were called in New York and Wilmington, and there were demands for a financial reorganization and overhaul of the company. Testily, Sam Goldwyn resisted this, and when the du Ponts continued to apply pressure, Sam presented the board with another of his angry resignations. It was accepted.

Now, for a while, Coleman du Pont, with no movie experience whatever, served as president of Goldwyn Pictures, but when things failed to get better without the founder at the helm and, indeed, got worse, a repentant board of directors went with hat in hand and asked Sam Goldwyn to return. Graciously, he accepted the invitation. Eighteen more months now passed, but without improvement.

As Goldwyn saw it, the trouble was that, during his brief absence from the company, Joe Godsol had been working to strengthen his position with the du Ponts. Godsol may have seen a more secure future for himself in an alliance with one of the largest private fortunes in America than with the seesawing fate of a young California motion picture company. In any case, in a series of even stormier quarrels within the board, Godsol increasingly

sided with the du Ponts against Goldwyn. Clearly, another Goldwyn resignation scene—which Goldwyn seemed to enjoy more and more as each new chance for one appeared—was building, and in March, 1922, it occurred. Goldwyn stood up in front of his board and announced that he was quitting, “And this time for good!” Then he added, for good measure, “And don’t try coming back to me on bended elbows.”

With him he took his block of Goldwyn Pictures stock, and this meant that the quarreling between Sam Goldwyn and Goldwyn Pictures was far from over. Though Sam owned the stock, he no longer owned the corporate name. As an independent producer, Sam Goldwyn saw no reason why he could not present movies under the banner SAMUEL GOLDWYN PRESENTS. Goldwyn Pictures, however, objected that this interfered with their right to produce under GOLDWYN PICTURES PRESENTS. Both names now had a certain appeal at the box office, and audiences would inevitably confuse one product with the other. In the court battle that followed, it was ruled that in all Samuel Goldwyn productions, wherever his name appeared on the screen, it had to be followed by the disclaimer NOT NOW CONNECTED WITH GOLDWYN PICTURES. Furthermore, these words had to appear in the same size type as the rest of the legend. This was galling to Sam Goldwyn. It seemed like providing free advertising for his former company on his own pictures. It was a situation, however, that he would not have to endure for long.

At Goldwyn Pictures, meanwhile, the irony of it all was that Joe Godsol, who had started all the trouble to begin with, had moved into a commanding position.

In 1924, rumors were circulating through the show-business worlds of both New York and Hollywood that a giant motion picture merger—the first of its size and importance—was about to take place. Marcus Loew of Metro Pictures Corporation had absorbed the six-year-old Louis B. Mayer Pictures Corporation. Now Loew was eager to acquire Goldwyn Pictures. Secret meetings were being held between Godsol, Mayer, Loew and his other partners, Joseph and Nicholas Schenck and Robert Rubin, and, on April 17, 1924, a merger was announced, resulting in a new company to be called Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Needless to say, the only Goldwyn stockholder who voted against the merger was the irascible Sam Goldwyn himself. He distrusted Loew and the Schencks, and had had run-ins with Mayer, whom he considered his archrival. But his voting shares were not enough to block

the merger. For the new company to be formed, Sam Goldwyn had to be bought out for cash. Thus it was that when Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was formed, Sam Goldwyn did not own a single share in the big company that bore his name.

Which suited him just fine. Sam Goldwyn had already demonstrated himself to be a man who was not emotionally cut out for partnerships. The long list of his shattered relationships with partners—Lasky, DeMille, Loew, Zukor, the Selwyns, Godsol, the du Ponts—attested to that. From now on, independence would mark his style, and at the time he outlined his producing philosophy. “A producer,” he declared, “should not be hampered by the opinions and rulings of a board of directors.” And he added, “This business is dog eat dog and nobody’s gonna eat me.”

What was not announced when the formation of MGM was made public was that an unusual agreement had been secretly drawn under which three men at the top of the company were given the privilege of dividing one-fifth of the company’s annual profits among themselves, before any other profits were passed along to other stockholders. This juicy piece off the top of the profit pie was to be sliced as follows: fifty-three percent to Louis B. Mayer, a clear indication of his production dominance; twenty percent to Irving Thalberg, Mayer’s youthful protégé and creative right-hand man; and twenty-seven percent to Robert Rubin, who was considered the company’s financial brain. And where, one might wonder, had Joe Godsol come out in this fast shuffle? Asked what Godsol’s title would be in the new company, Louis B. Mayer merely smiled and said, “Mr. Godsol is no longer with us.” Just as mysteriously as he had materialized, Godsol had disappeared.

That same year, another formidable competitor to both MGM and Sam Goldwyn would appear on the Hollywood scene in the person of thirty-three-year-old Harry Cohn. Just six years earlier, Cohn had joined Carl Laemmle’s Universal Pictures as Laemmle’s secretary. Now Cohn announced the formation of his own Columbia Pictures Corporation.

With the founding of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, of course, Sam Goldwyn was no longer required to add the irksome NOT NOW CONNECTED WITH ... line to the credits on his pictures. And privately he was pleased and flattered that the new corporation had decided to include his copyrighted name on its masthead. Even though he had nothing to do with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, most people just naturally assumed that he did. Now every MGM

production was advertising him. He particularly liked the fact that his name got higher billing on the letterhead than that of his rival L. B. Mayer, and could even rationalize that his was the top name of all, “because Metro isn’t anybody’s real name.” He was delighted that the company would keep his roaring “Leo the Lion” as its corporate logo and trademark. He saw this as another nod in the direction of his greatness, his immortality. Goldwyn, whose birthday was August 27, liked to point out, “After all, Leo is *my* birth sign.”*

By 1925, Goldwyn and the former Blanche Lasky had been divorced for ten years, and no one in the Lasky family was on speaking terms with Sam. As bitter as the divorce had been—with the tug-of-war over the couple’s small daughter, Ruth, whose mother had finally been granted custody; with the prolonged fight over money; and with accusations of infidelity and other malfeasance flying back and forth between the divorcing couple—Sam Goldwyn still professed to be in love with Blanche. Long after Blanche had moved back to New Jersey and resumed her maiden name (she was raising their daughter as Ruth Lasky, with the rest of the family forbidden to tell Ruth who her father was), Sam was still referring to Blanche as “my fairy princess.” After the divorce, Sam had been dating the actress Mabel Normand. But then, early in 1925, he met a twenty-one-year-old blond actress named Frances Howard.

Frances Howard had been born in Omaha in 1903, and shortly after that her father had moved the family to southern California, where Frances grew up in a tiny bungalow outside San Diego. The Howards were English-descended, and Roman Catholics, and Frances Howard’s upbringing had been strict, Spartan, and mass-going. As a teenager, however, she had become stages truck, and had been allowed to go to New York to try her luck in the theater. She had managed to obtain parts in two mildly successful Broadway plays, *The Swan*, and *Too Many Kisses* with Richard Dix. Among the various interesting men the pretty young ingenue had managed to meet had been Coudert Nast, the son of Condé Nast. One evening she was invited to dinner at Condé Nast’s Manhattan apartment, which by then had become something of a salon where everybody in New York who was young and talented and doing things gathered to meet people from out of town who were young and talented and doing things. For the

occasion, she bought a \$310 dress that she could ill afford. At the party, she was introduced to Samuel Goldwyn, who had just come in from Hollywood and who had arrived at the Nasts' with a beautiful woman on his arm.

Their opening words were not auspicious. Goldwyn, who had seen Frances in *The Swan*, approached her and said, "You're an awful actress." Frances replied coolly, "I'm sorry you think so," and was about to turn away to seek more congenial company when Goldwyn touched her arm and asked her if she would like to join him at an after-dinner party that was being given for Gloria Swanson and her new husband, the Marquis de la Falaise. Miss Howard was about to say no when her host, Mr. Nast, said, "I'll take you there, so you'll be escorted." At the Swanson party, Sam Goldwyn said to Frances, "I'd like to see you again." This time she thanked him and said no very firmly. Later, she commented to her friend Anita Loos, "Guess who wants to take me out. That awful Sam Goldwyn!"

And yet there was obviously something about the man that fascinated her—his brusqueness of manner, his cocky self-assurance, his obvious need to dominate every scene in which, and every woman with whom, he found himself—even though he was more than twenty years older than she. When he telephoned a few days later and asked her to have dinner with him, she found herself saying yes. At the time, she was living in a small apartment at Eighty-first Street and West End Avenue. When she gave him the address, he said, "I can't be seen in that part of town. Take a taxi to my hotel, the Ambassador, on Park Avenue." Even with that, she went. They dined at the Colony Restaurant and, on what was their first real date, Sam Goldwyn asked her to marry him.

Frances had been talking with Paramount about the possibility of doing a film on the West Coast, and so her reply to his proposal was an airy, "Well, perhaps I'll see you in California." But, less than four months later, when she arrived in Hollywood, Frances Howard was the second Mrs. Samuel Goldwyn. "It wasn't that he was a bit nice," she said later. "He had the most appalling manners. And it wasn't because I wanted to marry a movie producer to get into the movies. He'd made it very clear that the only career I was going to have was as his wife. And it certainly wasn't because he was rich because, at the time, I knew he was up to his ears in debt to the Bank of America. But there was something about him that was different from any

man I'd ever known. He seemed so lonely—the loneliest man I'd ever known. Maybe it was because he brought out the mothering instinct in me.”

Her family was appalled. There was the difference in their ages, and the difference in their religions. Still, Frances Goldwyn was to prove herself a stubborn woman who knew what she wanted and who, when she had it, was determined to keep it. She had made Sam promise that any children would be raised as Catholics. She knew of Sam's reputation as a flirt and a womanizer, and knew only too well of his long-standing relationship with Mabel Normand, but had decided wisely to overlook such matters. She knew of Sam's reputation as a high-stakes gambler, and decided that, if she could not change that, she would live as best as she could with it. She knew of Sam's love of ostentation and display—he operated on the theory that the more money he owed the more he must therefore spend, lest the competition suspect he was in difficulties of any sort—and in an effort to trim his budget got him to dispose of his “show-off Locomobile.” She understood Sam's ghetto-bred fear of tying up money in real estate, but she was also determined that they would live in a house and not spend their lives, as Sam had been doing, in a series of hotel suites. Her wedding gift to him was typically understated and commonsensical: a dozen neckties from Macy's.

Frances Goldwyn was both thrilled and horrified by the Hollywood of the mid-1920s that she discovered when she arrived. She and Sam had no sooner stepped off the Santa Fe Chief than he advised her that they were invited to a dinner party that evening. Hastily, she selected a pink chiffon dress embroidered with tiny imitation shells, but she was totally unprepared for what she saw when she arrived at the party. There was Pola Negri in a silver lamé turban, a dress covered with sequins, and most of the upper part of her body cascaded in diamonds. There was Constance Talmadge in white satin with a waterfall of orchids in dozens of different colors pinned to her shoulder and hanging to the floor so that she had to kick the corsage out of the way with her feet as she walked. Her sister, Norma, was also in orchids and in a long dress stitched with opals and moonstones. There was Ernst Lubitsch, King Vidor, the almost-too-handsome John Gilbert, and—most exciting of all to Frances—Earl Williams, the Robert Redford of his day. Frances Goldwyn had had a desperate girlhood crush on Earl Williams and had kept a Huyler's candy box full of photographs of him clipped out of

Photoplay magazine. Dizzily, she discovered that she had been seated next to him at the dinner table. But, once seated, she discovered something else about her idol. Earl Williams was totally without conversation. Desperately, she tried one topic after another—politics, the theater, the stock market, recent books, even the weather. Earl Williams responded by munching on celery sticks. At last she decided to try bringing up her Huyler's candy box. Immediately he was transfixed, and wanted to hear more. Which photographs had she liked best? Which profile did she prefer? Did she think his eyes were too small? Did she prefer him smiling or looking serious? She had discovered a fact that would stand her in good stead with every Hollywood actor: Earl Williams was interested only in Earl Williams. On the subject of his photographs he became voluble, and monopolized her for the rest of the evening. When he said good night to her, he told her, "You are the most fascinating woman I've ever met!"

At that first Hollywood party Frances Goldwyn learned other things less pleasant. She noticed, for example, the prodigious consumption of bootleg liquor. She noticed that, even in 1925, there were certain other chemicals involved in the Hollywood social scene. "There was something they sniffed, and something they smoked," she would recall. She also learned, to her dismay, what the position of a woman was in the movie capital. Across and around the table, where she tried to catch as much of the conversation as she could when Williams was not going on about himself, she heard the men talking, and the men were doing most of the talking. The women smiled and preened and nodded, and studied their reflections in the mirrors of their compacts. The men spoke of this gathering or that, and of who was there, and it was all first names—"Jack," and "Joe," and "Nick," and "Cecil," and "Sam" and "Charlie," and "Darryl," and "David," and "Lew," and "Doug." Then someone would add, almost as an afterthought, "And the usual wives, of course." At that dinner party Frances Goldwyn decided that, whatever happened, she would not let herself become just another of Hollywood's "usual wives."

Because, like the Polish crown prince he had observed as a youth in the streets of Warsaw, Sam Goldwyn now absolutely refused to carry money. Frances did that for him (even when they were engaged, she had had to pay for everything where cash was required). Now, she began handling his accounts, writing out his checks, balancing books that no bookkeeper had

looked at for fifteen years. Though he did his best to keep his gambling debts a secret from her, she usually managed to find out about them anyway, and quietly see that they were settled—a cardinal Hollywood rule said that a man's gambling debts must be paid before all others. She had a series of meetings with Mr. Giannini at his bank. When one of Sam's girl friends threatened to cause trouble, Frances just as quietly bought the lady off with a diamond bracelet from Cartier—"Not too expensive. I wanted to save our money." Sam began bringing home movie scripts for her to read, and when she criticized them, he criticized her criticisms. They argued, but the more they argued, the more Frances Goldwyn was learning about the motion picture business.

At the studio, she began noticing examples of extravagance and waste, and proposed cost-cutting methods. Lights that had theretofore been left burning all night long were ordered turned off at the end of a working day. Lavish stars' dressing rooms were divided to make a more thrifty use of space. Budgets for films were trimmed, salaries were held in rein. She also kept an eye on studio maintenance. When she discovered faulty plumbing in the men's room, she had it repaired. When a roof leaked, she had it patched. In short, she was doing things that no other Hollywood wife had ever dreamed of doing.

Most important, in the inevitable intra- and interstudio fights and skirmishes that were forever erupting, when horns locked and heads knocked together, it was Frances who coolly took on the job of patching the cracked skulls. One fact about Sam Goldwyn had become quite clear by that point in his producing career: he had a certain difficulty getting along with the people he worked with. When frictions arose, and Sam seemed on the point of exploding, it was Frances Goldwyn who stepped in to smooth things out with tact and diplomacy. Whether he realized it or not, Frances Goldwyn was running Sam Goldwyn. And, whether he knew it or not, he had acquired his most important business asset when he married her. Though she would always modestly deny it, it is quite possible that Sam Goldwyn would have failed utterly as a producer if it had not been for her. He was in a business for which he was temperamentally unsuited because it was one that required cooperation and coordination. These he could never manage. But she could. Never, after marrying Frances, would Sam Goldwyn stalk angrily out of a meeting or boardroom again. When he

wanted to pay her a particular compliment, he would tell her that she reminded him of his first wife, his fairy princess. She shrugged it off, knowing that it wasn't true.

Meanwhile, Frances Goldwyn still wanted them to have a house, and when she was not at the studio, she shopped for a piece of property. As usual with Sam Goldwyn, there was a shortage of ready cash; but Frances had managed to scrape a sum together, and within a few months had located a hilltop plot overlooking Laurel Canyon in Beverly Hills. The view was spectacular; visible across the valley, through tapering cypresses, was Pickfair, the home of Hollywood's royal family, Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. A flat space of ground would allow for the mandatory croquet court. The seller of the property wanted seventy-five thousand dollars for the lot. But Frances—"I Gentiled him down"—got it for fifty-two thousand. She supervised the design and building of the house, and then the furnishing and decorating of it. Sam had bought what he had been told was a "fake Picasso." Frances researched the painting and discovered, to her delight, that it was a *real* Picasso. It went on a living room wall.

Throughout the construction of the house, Sam showed little interest in the project, and busied himself making movies. In fact, by the time the house was finished—on their first wedding anniversary—and was ready for the Goldwyns to move into, Sam had not even visited the building site. Now the house was done, down to the last decorative detail, including the ashtrays, and Frances took her husband to tour their new home. He walked through the large and airy rooms, looking bemused, saying nothing. He walked up the curved staircase to the second floor, where Frances had provided one whimsical touch that she thought might amuse him: on each of the white Porthault towels in the bathrooms she had ordered embroidered a small yellow goldfish, to remind him of his earlier name. She waited downstairs for his reaction. There was suddenly an explosion from above. "Frances!" he bellowed. "There's no soap in my bathroom!"

"It was absolutely typical of him," Frances Goldwyn said later. "His first wife must have been terribly bored with him. He was a terrible man. But I loved that terrible man."

Goldwyn liked to say that he was only interested in producing "quality" films. "Quality" and "good, clean family entertainment" were two of his

principal watchwords. And, to a large extent, he was true to his word, turning out such cinematic milestones as *The Eternal City*, *Stella Dallas*—first, in 1925, as a silent, and later, in 1937, with sound—*Dodsworth*, *Arrowsmith*, and *Wuthering Heights*. He liked to say that one of his goals in life was to prove “that fine things, clean things can be done” in films.

Meyer Lansky was also interested in quality. Just as, with his snobbish streak, he preferred to operate “high-class” gambling casinos in the back rooms of posh Catskill resorts, and chose to offer his bootlegged products to the tonier speakeasies and nightclubs rather than to skid-row saloons, he was also concerned that his liquor customers should receive high-quality goods. Before Prohibition, the liquor business in the United States consisted of small, family-owned distilleries and tradesmen, a number of them Jewish, who turned out spirits and bottled them with no attempt at consistency or quality control, and no two bottles of liquor under the same label tasted quite the same. But since the American drinking public didn’t seem to care, it didn’t seem to matter. Some pre-Prohibition whiskey was bottled as it came out of the aging barrel. More often, it was cut with new whiskey, raw alcohol, and water. In 1899, the Distilling Company of America had been organized—the ill-famed Whiskey Trust—by a group of Jewish distillers who for a while managed to control most of the whiskey-manufacturing business in Kentucky. The trust failed fourteen years later when it could not compete with the lower prices asked by regional distillers in their local areas. Also, Kentucky whiskeys were supposed to be aged three or four years, but the cost of keeping an inventory of three or four years’ production had become prohibitive. To ease its cash-flow problem, the trust sold whiskey, unaged, to distributors as it came out of the still, with the suggestion that the distributors take care of the aging themselves. The distributors, who bottled the whiskey under their own labels, either aged it or not, as they saw fit. Most did not. The result was poor—or, at best, uneven—quality. In view of the number of Jews involved in these somewhat unscrupulous liquor dealings, it would not be unfair to say that one of the unspoken motives behind the Prohibition movement was anti-Semitism, just as, in a later year, there would be a successful movement on the part of the United States to wrest the motion picture business from “Jewish control” by forcing film companies to divest themselves of their theaters. Hints that Prohibition was in part an anti-Jewish reaction lie in the

Drys' arguments that drinking was responsible for bolshevism. Bolshevism meant Russia, and to most Americans, Russia meant Russian Jews.

But the law that went into effect in January, 1920, would have the paradoxical result of *improving*, in the long run, the liquor Americans drank. Prohibition quickly made bootleggers much more careful and choosy about what they were selling to their customers. To be sure, a few unprincipled sellers might offer poisonous wood alcohol disguised with flavorings, and call the result sloe gin, but this was not a very good way to encourage repeat business. Meyer Lansky and his friends figured, quite sensibly, that it would be unwise for word to get around that Lansky offered anything but the real thing. Similarly, men like Samuel Bronfman began to be much more careful about what they sold to men like Meyer Lansky. A bad batch of whiskey could have a distressing domino effect, with repercussions bouncing from the unhappy customer to the local bootlegger, to his supplier, and finally to the manufacturer. Lives—and money—could be heavily at stake along the way. And so “quality control”—a notion unheard-of before 1920—came willy-nilly to the liquor business, forced on it by Prohibition.

Of course, there were little games that could be played. Scotch, for example, when Lansky first entered the bootleg trade, cost him about \$25 a case, including overhead—the cost of bribing border guards, hiring boats to transport the contraband across the Jewish lake and stevedores to do the loading and unloading, and warehousing. The going price for bootleg Scotch was about \$30 a fifth, which gave Lansky a profit of about \$330 a case, or 1500 percent. Soon, however, he was able to devise a system that tripled his profits, to \$1,000 a case, or 4500 percent.

One of the yawning loopholes in the Volstead Act was that, although alcohol could not be sold, it could be prescribed by doctors for patients who required it for medical reasons. Therefore, medicinal alcohol continued to be manufactured perfectly legally in the United States, and all at once a great many doctors seemed to have a great many cases where daily dosages of alcohol were required to keep patients in the full bloom of health. In every major American city there was at least one government-licensed manufacturer of medicinal spirits, and what Lansky and his group began to do was to buy up these companies. Later, Lansky would admit that it was occasionally necessary to apply strong-arm tactics, with “offers that

couldn't be refused," but for the most part licensed manufacturers were more than willing to take in new partners when they were apprised of the spectacular extra profits they could expect to earn.

The system worked like this: Every quart of illegally imported Scotch whiskey was mixed with approximately two quarts of inexpensive, legal, and cheap raw alcohol. Then coloring agents were added to make sure that the resulting mixture had the right hue. Lansky hired professional chemists and tasters to make sure that the final flavor was indistinguishable from that of real Scotch. Obviously, the mixture had to be sold in Scotch-looking bottles with Scotch-looking labels, and so Lansky bought bottle manufacturers and printing companies to turn out the distinctive bottle shapes and labels of Johnnie Walker, Haig and Haig Pinch, Dewar's, and so on, which were near-perfect facsimiles. In the process of turning one bottle of authentic Scotch whiskey into three bottles of counterfeit Scotch-alcohol blend, Lansky soon found himself in the real estate business, since it was also necessary to buy warehouses in which to store his vast stocks. At the height of Prohibition it was estimated that sixteen million gallons of legally produced alcohol were being used to make forty-eight million gallons of Scotch a la Meyer Lansky.

It has often been said of Lansky that, had he chosen a more legitimate enterprise, he could, with his business genius, have run General Motors. In 1925, Lansky himself boasted that his business was probably bigger than Henry Ford's, and he may have been right.

His profits, by the mid-1920s, were enormous, but then so were his expenses. Approximately a hundred thousand dollars a week—or over five million dollars a year—went for bribes and “grease” for city officials and for other forms of protection. In New York City alone, the payoffs to police ran ten thousand dollars a week, paid all the way down the line from precinct captains to patrolmen on the beat. Still, Lansky and his partners were dividing a net income of over four million dollars a year, while enforcement of Prohibition by law went out the window. During the decade and a half that Prohibition was in effect, federal agents arrested 577,000 suspected offenders, confiscated over a billion gallons of bootleg liquor, seized 45,000 automobiles and 1,300 boats assumed to be involved in the illicit trade. And yet the assistant secretary of the U.S. Treasury, Lincoln C. Andrews, who was in charge of enforcing the Volstead Act, estimated that

less than five percent of the liquor traffic was being stemmed. Looked at another way, bootlegging had become the most cost-efficient business in the world.

In 1925, Lansky had another money-making idea. He was always being drawn back to his first love, gambling, and now, though he had always preferred doing business with well-heeled customers, he had a notion for making money from the poor. The idea occurred to him at the posh Beverly Hills Supper Club outside Newport, Kentucky—a wide-open little city across the Ohio River from Cincinnati. Newport, favored by a laissez-faire and bribable city government, had turned Cincinnati into something of a tourist attraction, so close was it to a place where illegal gambling parlors operated openly, while prim and proper Cincinnati looked the other way. Watching the white-coated waiters and black-tied croupiers of the Beverly Hills serve their well-turned-out clientele, Lansky wondered aloud if the same kind of gaming pleasure could not be offered to those at the other end of the economic scale. Italy, he pointed out, and other Latin countries had their national lotteries. The Irish had the sweepstakes. In all these games, for a few pennies a day a workingman could take a chance at winning a huge pot. At first, when Lansky explained that he was talking about betting pennies, his associates were skeptical. But the more he explained his idea, the more their ears pricked up. He and Lucky Luciano sat up all night working out the details.

The idea was simple. Every day, the customer would buy a three-digit number—from 000 to 999. The winning number would come from a supposedly unriggable source that would be published in every newspaper—the last three figures of the total sales on the New York Stock Exchange, for instance, or the betting totals at a particular racetrack. This way, no bettor who lost could claim to have been cheated. The winning number would pay at odds of six hundred to one, which would make it attractive, and since the actual chance of winning was less than one in a thousand the profits could be enormous. Thus the numbers game, or policy game, was invented. Lansky suggested that the game be introduced in Harlem, where a great many poor southern blacks had migrated after the war in search of better jobs. It was immediately a hit in Harlem, as it remains to this day, and the numbers game was quickly introduced in other urban ghettos—Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, and on and on.

As though such schemes as this were not enough, Lansky would also develop what he wryly called “my laundry business.” Again, it was brilliantly simple. Funds were skimmed off the profits from the illicit operations and shipped to Switzerland, where they were deposited anonymously in numbered accounts. Then Lansky would arrange for some of his legitimate businesses—real estate, warehousing, and so on—to borrow that money. The interest on these perfectly legal loans was then paid right back into the pockets of Lansky and Company. These interest payments, furthermore, were a tax-deductible business expense. As Lucky Luciano explained, “It was like we had a printin’ press for money.”

Up in Canada, meanwhile, Sam Bronfman seemed to have discovered a similar printing press. And as his comings and goings between the United States and Canada accelerated with his expanding business, he had to keep careful track of his whereabouts, because if he had spent as much as six months’ time in the United States in any given calendar year he would have been subject to American income taxes. He was also becoming an expert on, and outspoken advocate of, American and Canadian blended whiskeys. He had developed an interesting theory: that the congeners, or chemical aldehydes or esters, that were retained in blended whiskeys were of such a nature that they made blended whiskey not only a smoother but also a “safer” drink. That is, if a drinker sipped a blend all evening he would enjoy the pleasant euphoria that drink induces, but was less apt to get drunk. Also, he was less apt to suffer the unpleasant hangover effect on the morning after.

A finding by the Pease Laboratory seemed to bear Bronfman out, and the Pease Report suggested that blended whiskeys, being lower in congeners, were better for you than straight whiskeys. Excitedly, Sam Bronfman hired a psychologist to conduct a series of tests on drinkers in upstate New York. The tests lasted several weeks, and responses were measured between men drinking straights and men drinking blends. Not surprisingly, perhaps, considering who was paying him, the psychologist’s conclusions confirmed the boss’s hunch. Blends were more reliable. A “doctor” had proved it!

Blends, Sam was convinced, could be made more palatable to women. The very word *blend* had a softer, cozier, more reassuring sound than the harsh *straight*. Gin, he was convinced, turned a drinker mean and

quarrelsome, and he argued that gin “stayed in the system longer,” thereby increasing the chance of a hangover. Brandy was “an alcoholic’s drink,” and whenever he encountered a man who drank nothing but brandy, Bronfman was convinced that skid row lay right around the corner. His personal drink was always blended Canadian whiskey, taken in a tall glass topped with water or soda, and to demonstrate the superiority of blends—that they could be “trusted”—Mr. Sam, as he was now universally called, sipped on his whiskey throughout his business day and on into the evening, and it had to be admitted that no one ever saw him drunk. His own personal tastes, of course, did not deter him from also dealing in gins and brandies.

By 1925, Sam Bronfman was one of the richest men in Canada, but the one thing he could not seem to buy was *yikhes*—status, respectability, legitimacy. In Montreal, status was conferred by membership in the Mount Royal Club, by a directorship of the Bank of Montreal, by being named a governor of McGill University. But all these honors somehow managed to elude him. In fact, after he was taken to lunch at the Mount Royal Club by one of its members, the member was requested not to invite Sam Bronfman to the club again. It was not just that he was Jewish, exactly, and that made the snubs all the more galling. Sir Mortimer Davis, another Montreal Jew, not only belonged to all the best clubs—the Mount Royal, the Saint James’s, the Montreal Hunt, the Montreal Jockey, the Royal Montreal Golf, and the Forest and Stream—but was on the board of the Royal Bank of Canada and had been knighted by George V in 1917. Sir Mortimer was in the tobacco business. Was tobacco more respectable than liquor? In prim and proper Canada, yes, and for all he might protest that he was just another honest businessman, Sam Bronfman could not shake the “bootlegger” and “rumrunner” labels that had been attached to him.

Part of the problem, too, was Mr. Sam’s personality. He could be charming and congenial, but he often had trouble concealing his rough underside. He was known to have a violent temper, and when crossed, he would explode with four-letter epithets that would make even a Montreal stevedore blush. With underlings, he was as autocratic as the Bourbons of old, while with higher-ups or those he wanted to impress he was fawning and obsequious. The man whose staff lived in terror of their boss’s displeasure was also a man who, in a gathering of people over whom he had no personal control, seemed uncertain, shy, frightened, unable to think of a

word to say. The best that could be said for Sam and Saidye Bronfman, socially, was that they tried—giving lavish entertainments at their Westmount castle—but that they tried too hard; too defensively. They let their hands show too much—always a fatal error in the art of social climbing. Their insecurity was too apparent. At a party, the short, plump, balding figure of Mr. Sam Bronfman would be seen standing at a little distance from the center of things, frowning, shoulders hunched as though to ward off real or imagined snubs that were bound to come.

Worst of all, Sam Bronfman had arrived in smart and civilized Montreal—a city that liked to think it combined the best attributes of Paris and London—from the wilds of western Canada, and with very little history, not to mention education. Furthermore, what was known of his family’s history had its untidy chapters. In 1920, his brother Allan had been arrested for trying to bribe a Canadian customs official who had stopped three improperly registered cars heading for the border filled with Bronfman liquor. Then, in 1922, Sam’s brother-in-law Paul Matoff, who was married to Sam’s sister Jean, was murdered with a sawed-off shotgun in a Canadian railroad station while paying for a shipment of liquor. The family immediately declared that the motive was simple robbery, and Mr. Matoff’s murder was never solved, leaving the distinct impression that the family wanted it that way, with no further questions asked.

But in 1928 an event occurred that would supply Sam Bronfman with the history he needed, even though it would be a borrowed one. That was the year he acquired the firm of Joseph E. Seagram and Sons, Ltd. Seagram’s was a fine old Canadian distilling firm, and bore a fine old Christian name. Now that the Bronfman distilling business could use the name of Seagram, Sam Bronfman could incorporate Seagram’s respected history into his own, and soon, in a very much laundered corporate history, Sam would be able to declare, “Our company had its origin in 1857 in Canada, when Joe Seagram built a small distillery on his farm and sold its products in the surrounding area.”

The familiarity with which Mr. Sam would treat “Joe” Seagram, or “old Joe”—as in “old Joe would be proud of us today”—made it sound as though old Joe had been Sam Bronfman’s grandfather. But in fact even the “old Joe” story was not quite correct. It was true that the Seagram business could be traced back to 1857, when a small distillery had been built on the

banks of the Grand River in Waterloo, Ontario. But the builders had been two men named William Hespeler and George Randall; in 1857, Joseph E. Seagram was still a sixteen-year-old Ontario farm boy with no connection to the Hespeler-Randall distillery. That connection did not occur until 1869, when Seagram married William Hespeler's niece, Stephanie, and went to work for his wife's uncle. A year later, he bought out Hespeler's interest in the company, and changed its name.

In acquiring the Seagram name, Sam Bronfman, as the saying goes, "tried to become instant Old Money." But still the invitations to join the clubs and to adorn the boards of the banks did not come.

The timing of the Seagram acquisition, however, could not have been better. The noble experiment of Prohibition—doomed to failure from the beginning—was coming to an end. Everyone knew it, and it was only a matter of time before the Eighteenth Amendment would be repealed. Seagram's gins and whiskeys were well known and popular in the United States. The interim between the Seagram-Bronfman marriage and Repeal would give Mr. Sam just time enough to gear up Seagram's for its reentry—legitimately at last—into the American market.

Yikhes—it was something all the immigrants from Eastern Europe wanted. But, confronted abruptly with a different culture and set of values in the capitalist democracies of North America, each Russian Jew, in trying to adapt to and assimilate in the New World, interpreted *yikhes* differently. Though Sam Bronfman saw *yikhes* as being attained through memberships in the right clubs and corporate boards, in the old country his aspirations would have been sneered at as trivializing a very complicated concept.

In Russia, the word *yikhes* had carried connotations of "pedigree," "genealogy," or "family prestige," but it went even farther than that, for *yikhes* must be rightfully earned, honestly deserved, as well as inherited from one's ancestors. *Yikhes* has nothing to do with wealth, fame, or even personal achievement, though it does have a good deal to do with what an aristocracy consists of—an aristocracy of learning, rather than (as Americans have) an aristocracy of money. In Russia, there were levels of *yikhes*. The highest degree of *yikhes* was awarded to the scholar of the Talmud, the man of God, and a *shadchen*, or matchmaker, would carefully cite the list of scholars, teachers, or rabbis in the family pedigree of the

marriage candidate, whether male or female. The longer the list, the loftier the *yikhes*. A rich Jewish family would far prefer that its daughters marry rabbis, however poor, than merely rich men. Similarly, it would seek out rabbis' daughters as its sons' wives.

From godly learning, next down on the *yikhes* scale came virtue, or conformity to moral rectitude as to a divine law. Next came philanthropy, then service to the community through good works. But having generations of *yikhes* in one's family tree was no guarantee of *yikhes*. He who failed to live up to his family's standard and record was quickly stripped of his *yikhes*.

Rose Stokes, among others, strove for *yikhes*. Having failed to achieve it through her marriage, she sought it through work for her Communist workers' cause. But the trouble was, in the gloriously prosperous 1920s, nobody much wanted to hear about the woes of downtrodden workers, about exploitation of the poor. Her audience had shrunk, and her cause had gone out of date. The passions of Jewish radicalism that had first moved Rose to action had died down, had been channeled elsewhere, and Rose herself had been nearly forgotten, though her passions still burned as fiercely as ever.

In 1925, her name appeared briefly in the papers again when James Graham Phelps Stokes sued his wife for divorce. The Jewish Cinderella tale was over; the glass slipper had not fitted. Graham Stokes was charging his wife with "misconduct," which was usually interpreted as a euphemism for adultery, but which was the only available grounds for divorce in New York State at that time. Rose immediately issued an angry statement denying any wrongdoing on her part, denouncing New York's divorce laws, and saying that she and her husband had been agreeably disagreeing on many matters, political and otherwise, for years. Her bitter statement served no clear purpose, except that it brought all the old business of the Kansas City sedition trial out into the newspapers again. It was, however, an attempt to preserve some last shred of *yikhes*. Graham Stokes was granted his divorce later that year.

Not long afterward, he married Lettice Sands, a member of a socially prominent New York family that was related, through marriage, to the Pirie family of Chicago, who had founded Carson, Pirie, Scott. The new Mr. and Mrs. Stokes moved into an apartment at 88 Grove Street in Greenwich

Village, not far from the University Settlement House, where he still maintained an active interest, and Hartley House, which he had founded. For some time afterward, Rose kept an apartment on Christopher Street, just across from the tiny park that separates Grove and Christopher streets, within full view of the Stokeses' new apartment. It was as though she had stationed herself there to keep an eye on her former husband and his new wife. The new Mrs. Stokes, however, was unaware of this situation, and if her husband knew, he never spoke of it. But the Stokeses' cook, Anna, who had also worked for Rose, and who liked her, was very much aware of it. In fact, it made Anna very nervous. Only when, after a few years, Rose finally gave up her lonely, angry vigil on Christopher Street, and moved elsewhere in the city, did Anna confess to Lettice Stokes that she had had a recurring nightmare about the two women living in such close proximity. She had been terrified that when Lettice walked her dog, which had also previously belonged to Rose, the dog might recognize Rose on the street, run to her, and there would be an unpleasant confrontation. But in the anonymity of the New York City streets this never happened, and the wife and ex-wife never met.

Throughout the late 1920s, Rose continued to appear as a participant in strikes, demonstrations, and labor rallies in the city—marching, shouting, wielding placards, ever the voluble and fiery militant. In 1929, she was arrested again in a garment workers' strike, and at the time it was revealed that she had been secretly remarried—to an Eastern European Jew named Isaac Romaine, who was described as a “language instructor.”* That same year, a demonstration against the repression of the people of Haiti erupted into violence, and Rose was hospitalized for multiple bruises and contusions. At the time, she and her new husband were living at 215 Second Avenue, a dingy area near Fourteenth Street, where, it was said, poverty became her. She looked even more proud and beautiful than when she had married a rich man two dozen years earlier. She had, however, continued to use the name Rose Pastor Stokes, the name that had made her famous, even though the *Social Register* had long since stopped sending her its little annual questionnaire, and had dropped her from its pages.

*Astrology was not his strong suit. In fact, he was a Virgo.

*This, at least, was how the *New York Times* described him. Perhaps because Rose herself was by then slipping into obscurity, there is some confusion about the identity of her shadowy second husband. The *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* (1943) gives his name as V. J. Jerome, and describes him as a “Marxist writer and editor.”

10

LITTLE CAESARS

Why, one might wonder, did so many Russian-Jewish businessmen—and women—once they had become successful, become more despotic and fearsome than the czars they had fled Russia to escape, the czars who took as their titles the Slavic form of “Caesar”? Was it because they had been too busy building their businesses to learn the subtle nuances of American speaking patterns, manners, and body language that mark the conventional, diplomatic, soft-spoken wealthy WASP? Was it because their success had come with such amazing speed that they had not had time to adjust to it? Was it because they were, for the most part, short in stature (their children and grandchildren, thanks to better nutrition, would tower over them), and had developed the so-called Napoleon complex of short men? Or was it because they had prospered in businesses—liquor, fashion, cosmetics, entertainment—that seemed, *au fond*, frivolous; that lacked the solid Protestant respectability of commercial banking, insurance, stockbrokerage, automobile manufacturing; that they were secretly ashamed of, and therefore defensive about? All these possibilities have been offered to explain the rough-diamond qualities of the people who made these first-generation fortunes, and some or all may apply, but the real answer may lie deeper than that, in the kind of terrible compromise the Jew in America had to make between his new situation and his past. It was a compromise that was both psychological and sociological. For centuries, as W. H. Auden has pointed out, the Jews of Eastern Europe had lived under a system where an individual’s identity and worth were defined by his lifetime membership in a class. Which particular class was not important, but it was a class from which neither success nor failure—except on an unlikely spectacular scale

—could remove him. In the volatile, competitive spirit of America, however, any class or status was viewed as temporary, reversible. Any change in an individual's achievement altered it, and an individual's sense of personal value depended upon the continuous ups and downs of achievement. In this new Diaspora, where the values and desires of the poor were expected to be transformed in the twinkling of an eye to the values and desires of the rich and would-be rich, the result could be severe anxiety. Though the quick-success stories of the Eastern European Jews in the United States might read like fairy tales, they could seem like personal nightmares in real life.

What else but anxiety explains the apparent double identity of a man like, say, Samuel Bronfman—out of his immediate business element a shy, introverted, lost-looking, and uneasy little fellow, but hell on wheels in his office? If Meyer Lansky was the Little Caesar of the Underworld, Bronfman was the Little Caesar of Distilled Spirits. His fits of temper were legendary. A specially reinforced telephone had to be installed for him, because of his habit—whenever he heard something he disliked or disbelieved—of first holding the receiver away from his ear, snarling at it like an enraged wildcat, and then slamming it into its cradle with such force that a number of ordinary instruments had been shattered. He also not infrequently threw the entire telephone across the room, or at a visitor, yanking the cord out of the wall as he did so. Once he hurled a heavy paperweight at an employee, who managed to duck, and only a metal sash prevented the object from flying through a window and out into a busy street below. Trying to make light of this incident, his staff prepared a plaque to mark the point of the paperweight's impact, in the wistful hope that such an outburst might not occur again.

He had a habit of pouncing into his employees' offices unexpectedly, with questions for which he demanded immediate answers. Woe betided the person who didn't know the answer or, even worse, who pretended that he did, and tried to fake it. Mr. Sam had an impressive vocabulary of abuse, and when aroused to fury, he would string his epithets together so that a son of a bitch would become "that lousy, no-good son of a son of a son of a bitch." One Seagram executive likened his nature to a tiger's, but a more apt analogy would have been to a man-eating shark. After one particularly blistering outburst, at a dinner meeting, Sam had started throwing his food,

and eventually his plate and all the crockery in sight, at a beleaguered associate, and then fired everyone in the room. Later, he was asked if he oughtn't to worry lest his tantrums brought on an ulcer. He growled in reply, "I don't *get* ulcers. I *give* them." He had a point.

No foe to nepotism, he employed a number of members of his family in his company. Yet there was no question but that Sam was in absolute charge. A nephew might address Sam's brother as "Uncle Allan," but Mr. Sam was always "Mr. Sam." And relatives were fired with the same furious abandon as nonrelatives when, in Mr. Sam's opinion, they failed to measure up to his own rigorous standards. He was a notorious penny pincher, and the salaries he paid were among the lowest in the liquor business, yet when anyone complained, he lost his job. Sam was equally reluctant to pass out titles as rewards for loyal service, and a number of valued associates who, in another situation, might have expected to have been made vice-presidents never achieved such rank in the Bronfman organization. Occasionally, however, he begrudgingly conferred a title, if it meant an alternative to a raise—as happened with one man who asked if he didn't deserve the title of general manager. Sam agreed with a wave of his hand, but a few months later the man was fired. "The damn fool ... started to *act* like a general manager," Sam explained. "*I* am the general manager."

His attitude toward money was peculiar, to say the least. Once, when he was fixing his first drink of the day, which was around ten in the morning, a visitor commented that the Schweppes soda water he was using had probably cost more than the whiskey. Horrified, Sam buzzed for his secretary and told her not to buy any more Schweppes. "It's expensive!" he bellowed. "Thirty-five cents a bottle!" And yet, hard by his office, there was a fully equipped kitchen staffed with a full-time chef, whose chief duty was to prepare lunch for the boss. Much of the early portion of Mr. Sam's working day was spent planning his midday meal, and he would go over menu selections at length with his secretary, discussing seasonings, sauces, entrées, desserts. For some reason, he called his stomach "Mary," and when he had settled on a combination of dishes that pleased him, he would rub this part of his anatomy and say, "Mary, you're going to be well fed today!"

He was an inveterate clipper of money-saving coupons from newspapers and magazines, and was forever entering contests that offered cash prizes, though he never won anything to anyone's knowledge. The last few minutes

of every business day were spent turning out all the office lights to save on electricity costs, though he tipped Pullman porters with hundred-dollar bills. Once, on a shopping trip to New York with his wife and one of his sisters, Saidye Bronfman admired a hat in a millinery shop. The hat cost fifty-five dollars, and Sam told Saidye that she couldn't buy it. Later, back at their hotel suite, Sam told Saidye to telephone the shop and order the hat. When Saidye asked him why he had changed his mind, he said, "I don't want my sister to know I'd let you spend that much for a hat."

And yet, for all his crotchets and tyrannical ways, Mr. Sam occasionally revealed a gentler side. He was fond, for example, of Tennyson's poetry, and could quote it at astonishing length from memory. He also had a pungent sense of humor. Asked once what he considered mankind's greatest invention, he snapped back, "Interest!" And asked what he felt was the secret of his success, he said, "Never fire the office boy!" It was true that, particularly among the lower echelons of his organization, he had built up a cadre of employees who would lay down their lives for him.

No less a despot was Helena Rubinstein, who, having made her first fortune, almost by accident, in Australia, having added to it substantially with *Maisons de Beauté* in London and Paris, had now made New York her headquarters for a cosmetics empire that would expand throughout the 1920s until it included a hundred countries. Throughout the 1920s, too, her feud with the older, established beauty queen, Elizabeth Arden, would escalate. At one point, Miss Arden hired the entire Helena Rubinstein sales staff away from her. Madame Rubinstein quickly retaliated, and hired Miss Arden's ex-husband, Thomas J. Lewis, as *her* sales manager, crowing at the time, "Imagine the secrets he must know!" (It turned out that he didn't know many, and Lewis was let go not long afterward.) After divorcing her first husband, Helena Rubinstein married a Georgian prince, Archil Gourielli-Tchkonia, for whom she created her House of Gourielli line of men's toiletries. (Rumored to have been a former Parisian taxi driver, Gourielli nonetheless played a mean game of backgammon, which had helped him climb in French society. And, some twenty years Helena Rubinstein's junior—no one knew exactly, since her age was as closely kept a secret as Miss Arden's and their respective beauty formulas—he was still a prince.) Miss Arden retaliated by marrying a prince of her own, Prince

Michael Evlanoff. Though the two women were never formally introduced, they had frequent glaring contests across the rooms of fashionable New York restaurants, where Maître d's were careful never to seat them too close together. Refusing to dignify her competitor by name, Madame Rubinstein always referred to Arden as "the Other One."

Madame Rubinstein's rages were as famous as Sam Bronfman's, and she was always shouting "Dumkopf!" "Nebbish!" "No-good bum!" "Liar!" "Cheat!" and "Thief!" at cowering employees in her loud, whiskey-tenor, heavily accented voice, which could be heard from one end of her offices to the other. New employees were advised by old-timers, "Try not to let her notice you." Once, a new secretary—all the secretaries were imperiously addressed as "Little Girl" by their employer—was looking for the ladies' room and actually opened, by accident, the door to the facility that was Madame Rubinstein's private toilet. There was a raucous scream, and the luckless girl was fired on the spot.

Even her own two sons never learned how to deal with her, so violently did her opinions of them swing from day to day. Her relationship with her son Horace was particularly explosive. "Horace is a genius!" she would exclaim one day. "Horace is gaga!" she would announce the next. But there was no doubt that she was as shrewd as she was tough. When a thirty-room triplex penthouse at 625 Park Avenue, one of the avenue's most luxurious buildings, became available, she wanted to buy it, offering cash. She was advised that the cooperative building's board of directors did not want Jewish tenants. So Helena Rubinstein simply bought the building.

Meanwhile, her policy on salaries was becoming notorious. She would demand to know what a prospective employee wanted to be paid, and when he or she mentioned a figure, Madame Rubinstein would offer exactly half. When cleverer job seekers tried asking double what they expected to get, Madame somehow sensed this and offered a quarter of the figure. The Rubinstein payroll structure thus became somewhat surreal. Like Sam Bronfman, Madame was a demon about keeping down office expenses, and about twice a month she took unannounced after-hours inspection tours of her offices, turning out unnecessary lights and poring through the contents of wastebaskets, fuming at evidence that office time had been used for personal business, or at staff members who had failed to use up both sides

of a scrap of paper. At the same time, employees discovered working late at their desks were given grunts and clucks of approval.

A great many members of her large family were on her payroll in one capacity or another, but even kinship did not protect her relatives from the vagaries of the boss's quixotic personality or high-handed business tactics. When her sister Stella, who was in charge of Rubinstein's French operations, was about to be married, Madame Rubinstein asked for a thousand dollars of company funds to buy Stella's wedding present. When asked to whose account these funds should be charged, she replied, "Stella's, of course!"

She was a woman who, seeing an ad for manufacturer's seconds of hosiery at Bloomingdale's, would send her secretary out to snap up as many pairs of stockings as she could carry at ninety cents a pair. At the same time, she was amassing a million-dollar collection of paintings (a number of them portraits of Madame herself), and another spectacular collection of African art. She claimed to care little about her personal appearance, and indeed her mascara was often smeared and her lipstick streaked. But she spent another fortune on clothes and other personal adornments—diamonds, rubies, sapphires, ropes of emeralds, and yards of pearls. She scavenged wastebaskets for reusable paper clips while, at the same time, buying houses and estates all over the world and filling them with antiques. Soon, in addition to the Park Avenue triplex, there was a town house in Paris on the Île Saint-Louis, a country place at Combe-la-Ville, a town house in London, and an estate in Greenwich, Connecticut. She often held business meetings in her bedroom while she sat in bed, munching on a chicken leg.

One of her most brilliant business coups occurred in 1929. Had she somehow foreseen the great stock market crash that would occur later that year? In some uncanny way she may have, because early in 1929 she arranged to sell her American business to the banking house of Lehman Brothers for eight million dollars. She then repaired to Paris, where she planned to concentrate on her European operations. Then came the Crash, and Helena Rubinstein stock tumbled along with everything else. Meanwhile, she expressed dissatisfaction with the way Lehman Brothers was running her American company. They were taking her products "mass market"—into small groceries and drugstores, whereas previously they had been sold only through prestigious department and specialty stores. She

decided to buy her American company back. She did this by writing thousands of personal letters to small Rubinstein stockholders, most of whom were women, asking them if “as one woman to another” they thought that a bunch of Wall Street bankers could run a woman’s cosmetic business as well as a woman could. If they agreed with her, would they please give her their voting proxies? Meanwhile, she bought back as much Rubinstein stock as she could at bargain-basement prices. Thus, within a year, she had enough stock and votes to force Lehman Brothers to sell the company back to her at her price, which was somewhat under two million dollars. Her profit: over six million dollars. “All it took,” she would shrug, “was a little chutzpa.”

“I make a rule for you,” Sam Goldwyn would say—it was one of his favorite expressions, and he was always “making a rule,” usually jabbing a stubby forefinger into the chest of an opponent as he made it. When asked why the sets of his motion pictures were always the scene of so much strife, turmoil, and dissension, he replied, “I make a rule for you. A happy company makes a bad picture.” He may have had a point because a number of good and profitable pictures did emerge from production companies that were famously unhappy.

He was unquestionably a most difficult man to work for. He had a theory, for example, that writers and directors were not good for one another, and that on any picture they should be kept as far apart as possible. This meant that any writer-director collaboration that took place had to be done on the sly. Goldwyn insisted on having a hand in every phase of his studio’s operation, and was forever interfering with other people’s jobs. King Vidor, at one point, refused to direct a Sam Goldwyn picture unless it was stipulated in his contract that Goldwyn remain off the set throughout the shooting of the film.

But Goldwyn paid very little attention to contracts. In the paramilitary structure of the early studios, the producer was the supreme commander in chief, and at the very bottom of the pecking order were the writers, the privates. When Sam Goldwyn at one point wanted Anita Loos to write a picture for him, he called Miss Loos in and offered her a year’s contract at five thousand dollars a week, which she quickly accepted. Later, an associate gasped, “My God, Sam! That’s two hundred and sixty thousand

dollars a year!” Goldwyn replied, “Don’t worry. I can get out of the contract when I’m through with her.” And, to be sure, he did.

His running feud with Louis B. Mayer at MGM became legendary. Once, during an altercation in the locker room at the Hillcrest Country Club, Mayer, who was much smaller in size than Goldwyn, managed to back the larger man into a corner and then pushed him into a laundry hamper full of wet towels. By the time Goldwyn had clambered out of the hamper, Mayer had disappeared. The feud occasioned one of Goldwyn’s choicest Goldwynisms. When a friend chided him about the amount of bickering and fighting that went on between the two men, Goldwyn looked shocked and surprised. “*What?*” he cried. “We’re like friends, we’re like brothers. We love each other. We’d do anything for each other. We’d even cut each other’s throats for each other!”

In the office, Sam Goldwyn was given the code name “Panama”—for the large white Panama hats he often wore—and he was referred to as “Panama” in secret little interoffice memos that circulated about the studio. “Panama’s on the warpath!” a scribbled note might say, and that inevitably meant that he *was* on the warpath, and when on the warpath he was abusive to his staff as well as to his household servants. Dinners at the Goldwyns’ were often punctuated with explosions from the head of the table, at the butler, the maid, or the cook. “Take back these peaches!” he would roar, and Frances Goldwyn, in her role as peacemaker, would quietly explain to the cook, “These canned peaches aren’t Mr. Goldwyn’s brand.”

At the studio, invitations to Mr. Goldwyn’s table in the executive dining room were naturally command performances. Once, when Goldwyn had invited an associate named Reeves Espy to join him for lunch, Goldwyn startled Espy by appearing at Espy’s office door to pick him up. It was usually done the other way around. At the time, Goldwyn had been feuding with an art director named Richard Day, and Mr. Day, who had had his fill of Goldwyn, was threatening to quit. Now Goldwyn further startled Espy by saying, “Call Dick Day and ask him to come along for lunch.” Espy was quite sure what Day would think of the invitation. The problem was that interoffice communication was by intercom, and if Espy got Day on the intercom, Sam Goldwyn would be able to hear everything Day had to say. But Espy did as he was told, rang for Day’s station on the intercom, and to

the voice that answered said quickly, “Dick, Sam Goldwyn wants you to join us for lunch. *Dick, Mr. Goldwyn’s standing right here!*”

At Goldwyn Pictures, it became a tradition that every departing employee was given a farewell lunch by the boss, and at Goldwyn Pictures people came and went with some frequency. At these lunches, most of the hour was consumed with speeches extolling Sam Goldwyn, and at one of them, producer Fred Kohlmar said, “Sam, this is the fifth of these lunches we’ve had in a month. Can we have one when *you* leave?”

He was redeemed, perhaps, by the famous Goldwynisms. Each new example of fractured English was passed around Hollywood, chuckled at, and embellished. As a result, a few of the celebrated utterances are apocryphal, but most are true. He really did say, “Let me sum it up for you in two words—impossible!” And he did say, on a number of occasions, “Let me pinpoint for you the approximate date.” But though a number of his people took the Goldwynisms to mean that the boss was a little soft in the head, there was always a certain germ of truth and sense in most of them. When he said, “Include me out,” it meant that he wished to be included among those who were out. When he said, “A verbal contract isn’t worth the paper it’s written on,” he was absolutely right—it isn’t. When he said, “I took the whole thing with a dose of salts,” one had to admit that a dose was as good as a grain. And when, proposing a toast to the visiting Field Marshal Montgomery, he rose, lifted his glass, and said, “A long life to Marshal Field Montgomery Ward!” one could understand his confusion. When he said, “Every Tom, Dick, and Harry is named John,” he had a point. And a touch of sarcasm could not be ruled out when Edna Ferber mentioned that she was writing her autobiography, and he asked her, “What’s it about?”

Even Hollywood’s favorite Goldwynism turned out to be laced with truth. The occasion was when Sam and Frances were about to embark on a cruise to Hawaii, and his studio staff came down to the dock to see the Goldwyns off. While the staff stood waving at him from the pier, Sam stood at the ship’s railing, waving back, and calling, “Bon voyage! Bon voyage! Bon voyage to you all!” Sure enough, a few days after his return from his holiday, most of those same well-wishers were sent voyaging off into the choppy seas of unemployment.

Everyone knew, furthermore, that Goldwyn never paid any attention to the three-hour time difference between New York and Los Angeles. Therefore, when Goldwyn telephoned Marcus Loew's son Arthur in New York, and woke him at two o'clock in the morning, and when Loew said, "My God, Sam, do you know what time it is?" no one should have been surprised to hear that Sam turned to his wife and said, "Frances, Arthur wants to know what time it is."

Even more famous than the Goldwynisms, within the movie industry, was Goldwyn's ability to assume the offensive in any business deal, and to immediately get his opponent on the run. At MGM, David Selznick was in charge of loan-outs of performers, and a typical phone call from Goldwyn would begin, "David, you and I have a very big problem." Asked what the problem was, Goldwyn would reply, "You have an actor under contract, and I need him for a picture." Another tactic was to completely befuddle a competitor, to throw him off his guard by making him think he was losing his mind. Goldwyn once telephoned Darryl Zanuck to get him to part with a director whom Zanuck had under contract. He was told that Zanuck was in a meeting. Goldwyn told Zanuck's secretary that Zanuck must be got out of his meeting, that the business was urgent, an emergency, a matter of life and death. When, after a long delay, Zanuck finally came on the phone, Goldwyn said pleasantly, "Yes, Darryl. What can I do for you today?" He used the same technique on Lillian Hellman to get her to write the screenplay for *Porgy and Bess*. After spending several days trying to locate her, and leaving urgent messages for her in a variety of locations, he finally found Miss Hellman at her summer home on Martha's Vineyard. He opened the conversation with, "Hello, Lillian. How nice of you to call. What can I do to help you?"

Though he relied heavily on the talent, it irked him whenever an actor, director, or writer tried to take credit for the success of a movie that he, Sam Goldwyn, had produced. When Eddie Cantor, already a radio star, came to Hollywood to do *Kid from Spain*, he was nothing but trouble. He refused to accept the dressing room assigned to him because it had once been Al Jolson's, and Jolson's career had petered out, and Cantor was superstitious. Cantor also tried to get his wife, Ida, into the publicity buildup for the film, thus diluting Goldwyn's own publicity campaign. He gave an interview to reporters in which he complained about Goldwyn's studio policies, and

about the low salary Goldwyn was paying him. Yet, when the film was finished, Goldwyn was pleased with it, and at a private screening he instructed his staff, “don’t anybody tell Cantor how good he is. I want to use him for another picture.” Then, when *Kid from Spain* became a hit, Eddie Cantor had the temerity to announce that it was all thanks to him, and to the popularity of his radio show. Goldwyn was furious. “Are you kidding me?” he roared at Cantor. “A little radio show made a big motion picture? Why don’t you do a little motion picture, and get a big radio show?”

“I make a rule for you,” he said to his story editor, Sam Marx, when Marx proposed buying a novel called *Graustark* that was set in a mythical kingdom. “I make a rule for you—never bring me a story about mythical kingdoms.” Then, from rival MGM, along came *The Prisoner of Zenda*, set in a mythical kingdom, and a big hit. Immediately Goldwyn wanted to buy and produce *Graustark*. When the negotiations for *Graustark* were completed, Goldwyn said to Marx, “Look—who thought of *Graustark*? I did! Why didn’t you think of *Graustark*?” Marx reminded him of the recent rule. “I didn’t mean classics,” replied Goldwyn. He had to have the last word.

Occasionally, Goldwyn’s last words betrayed his essential innocence. When the filming of *Romeo and Juliet* was proposed to him, Goldwyn liked the story, but wondered if it couldn’t have a happy ending. Jokingly, an associate said, “I don’t think Bill Shakespeare would like that, Sam.” Goldwyn replied, “Pay him off!” And, long after the rule against mythical kingdoms had been discarded, Goldwyn conceived the idea of making a movie of *The Wizard of Oz*, and ordered his secretary to send out for a copy of the book. The only copy that could be found was a child’s edition, in large print and with pop-up illustrations. Seeing Goldwyn poring studiously over this volume, an aide said, “Don’t bother reading it, Sam. MGM has already bought the book.” Furious, Goldwyn picked up the telephone and called L. B. Mayer. “L.B.,” he said, “I am sorry to report some very bad news to you. You have bought a book that I want.”

When Norman Taurog was directing *They Shall Have Music* for Goldwyn, Goldwyn asked to see a set of daily “rushes.” After watching them, he announced that he couldn’t understand the story. Taurog, protesting that the story seemed perfectly clear to him, finally brought in a six-year-old singer from the children’s choir that was performing in the

film, and ran the rushes through for him. The child said that *he* understood the picture. “So?” said Goldwyn in triumph. “I’m making a picture for six-year-olds?” And somehow Goldwyn’s critical hunch about the film was correct. *They Shall Have Music* was both a critical and a box-office flop, with the critics complaining that the plot was difficult to follow. As a result, Goldwyn would never again hire anyone who had been associated with the picture.

One director whom Goldwyn held in considerable awe was the legendary John Ford. In fact, Ford’s reputation for genius and temperament actually frightened Goldwyn. Like King Vidor, Ford had stipulated in his contract that Goldwyn not interfere with his filming in any way. When Ford was directing *Hurricane* for Goldwyn, which starred John Hall and Dorothy Lamour, Goldwyn secretly managed to see a “rough cut” version of the movie, and became concerned that Ford was not using enough close-ups of the actors’ faces. He fussed privately over this for several days, and then said to an aide, “Let’s take a walk over and see John Ford.” When he approached Ford on the set, Goldwyn was very nervous, and Ford’s look, when he saw Goldwyn coming, was not welcoming. Shifting his weight from one foot to the other, Goldwyn touched on a variety of subjects—the weather, Ford’s health, Ford’s wife’s health, and so on. Finally, Ford grew impatient with the interruption and said, “What’s on your mind, Sam? Spit it out!” Shyly, Goldwyn mentioned what he considered to be the shortage of close-ups. “Listen,” said Ford, “when I want to, I’ll shoot an actor from *here* up,” and he jabbed Goldwyn in the stomach, “or from *here* up,” and he poked him in the chest, “or from *here* up,” and he flipped his finger in the producer’s nose. Walking away from the meeting, Goldwyn said, “Well, at least I put the idea in his mind.” It wasn’t the last word, exactly, but it was close.

By the 1920s, David Sarnoff was not yet in a position to be a despot, benevolent or otherwise. He was still cautiously working his way up a corporate ladder. Not long after his *Titanic* triumph, while continuing to work in the Marconi station atop Wanamaker’s, Sarnoff had written a long memorandum to his employers that began, “I have in mind a plan of development which would make radio a ‘household utility’ in the same sense as the piano or phonograph. The idea is to bring music into the home

by wireless.” The memo went on to describe what Sarnoff called the “Radio Music Box,” what its range could be, how it might be installed, what kind of antenna it would require, and how much it might cost—Sarnoff estimated that home radios might be made to sell for about seventy-five dollars apiece, and that as many as a hundred thousand Americans might buy radio music boxes. The prophetic memorandum was duly read, filed away, and nothing was done about it.

Then, in 1919, the American Marconi Company was reorganized as the Radio Corporation of America under the financial sponsorship of General Electric, which had been doing some research of its own into the field of radiotelephony at its laboratories in Schenectady. Owen D. Young was named as head of the new company, and Sarnoff was given the title of commercial manager, though he was not put on the board. Mr. Young, a lawyer, knew next to nothing about radio, but fortunately his twenty-eight-year-old commercial manager knew quite a bit. From the outset, Young found himself turning to Sarnoff for technical advice and suggestions.

Sarnoff, meanwhile, was busily casting about for new ways to popularize radio as an entertainment medium, and to sell radio to the general public. What he needed was another *Titanic*, but preferably not a grim disaster—something that would be lively, entertaining, fun, and popular. In 1921, he believed he had found just what he was looking for.

On July 2 of that year—a Saturday night in the middle of a long Fourth of July weekend—the heavyweight champion of the world, America’s own Jack Dempsey, was to fight a foreign challenger named Georges Carpentier, known as “the orchid man of France.” The country was whipping itself into a patriotic frenzy over the event. Millions of dollars’ worth of wagers—many of them being handled by Meyer Lansky and his men—rode on the outcome. Seats in the Jersey City arena where the match was to be fought had been sold out months in advance, and scalpers were hawking tickets for as much as a thousand dollars each. David Sarnoff proposed that RCA broadcast the fight, live, blow by blow, from ringside.

A number of his RCA higher-ups were dubious. For one thing, RCA had no radio station in the vicinity of Jersey City, and so how could the broadcast be transmitted? Also, since there were only a relative handful of crystal radio receivers in the country, belonging to amateur radio buffs, how would a general public be able to receive the broadcast? David Sarnoff set

about solving these problems, and he had very little time to do so. General Electric, it seemed, had just completed the construction of what was then the world's largest radio transmitter, and Sarnoff proposed that RCA "borrow" it for the fight. But there was a hitch. GE's transmitter had been built under contract for the United States Navy, which owned it, and the navy brass were unwilling to lend their costly new apparatus for a prizefight. A New Yorker named Franklin D. Roosevelt, however, who had been secretary of the navy under Woodrow Wilson, was presumed to still wield some power with his former naval colleagues. Roosevelt was approached, and he turned out also to be a Dempsey fan. He was able to persuade the Navy Department to part with their transmitter for the fight and "the glory of America."

Meanwhile, Sarnoff knew from some earlier experiments with radio communication between moving trains that a tall transmitting tower stood, unused, over the Hoboken railroad station, just two and a half miles from the Jersey City arena. The navy's equipment was shipped to Hoboken, hooked up to the tower, and the Pullman porters' changing room at the Hoboken railroad station became a radio station. The telephone company was then persuaded to run a line between the station and the scene of the fight.

The only remaining problem was how the public was going to hear the broadcast, but to Sarnoff the answer seemed simple enough—in movie theaters. Marcus Loew of MGM, who was in charge of his company's theater operations, was contacted, and was quicker than most to see the commercial possibilities of the undertaking. For a share of the box-office take, Loew turned over his chain of New York theaters and installed extra loudspeakers and amplifiers for the event.

The live broadcast was a complete sellout throughout the metropolitan area as families from outlying areas flocked to New York to snap up the precious tickets. Even more happily, Jack Dempsey won, as everyone had hoped he would, knocking out the handsome French challenger in the fourth round. America's honor had been defended. Boxing had its first million-dollar gate, when more than 90,000 spectators paid \$1,700,000 for tickets at the arena. Dempsey himself took home \$300,000. Carpentier's consolation prize was \$215,000. RCA and MGM made hundreds of thousands more from the largest radio listening audience in history. The

genius of young David Sarnoff was once again a topic at dinner tables everywhere. So was the sudden demand for radio receivers. Virtually overnight, RCA found itself in the radio manufacturing business. Sarnoff was given a raise, and a new title—general manager of RCA.

Of course, this new burst of fame and public acclaim for David Sarnoff did not assure him of instant popularity within the corporate framework of the company. On the contrary, corporate jealousies being what they are, he was heartily disliked in some quarters, and resented in others. For one thing, there was his obvious youth, his obvious brains, and the obvious fact that he had the ear of the company's chief executive officer. Then there was the fact that he did not even possess a high school diploma, and that he was Jewish. Also, though he was carefully deferential and polite to those in positions higher up than he, he had adopted a rather offhand manner—a bit brash and cocky, if not actually condescending—to those a notch or two below. He was not exactly a handsome young fellow, but he had large, bright eyes and he always seemed to be grinning over some inner joke. He had a look, in other words, of being rather pleased with himself—as indeed he had every right to be—but to say that this sat well with his fellow employees would be far from the truth. In fact, whenever possible, they rode him unmercifully. Jobs that were patently impossible somehow found their way to his desk. The most difficult, as well as the most boring, salesmen were referred to his office. If a way, however petty, could be found to make David Sarnoff look ridiculous—or, even better, wrong—it was tried. But—and this was the most irritating thing about the man—despite all this, he seemed impossible to ruffle. Nothing seemed capable of erasing the grin, the look of self-confidence, the look of success.

If anything, David Sarnoff's air of self-confidence seemed to grow maddeningly more pronounced. He had already begun to think of himself in nautical terms—as the man “on the bridge,” the skipper of some great ship, the pilot plotting the course of radio communications through the stormy seas of the future. He would draw a parallel between the date of his own birth, in 1891, and “the birth of the electron,” as though some cosmic destiny awaited him as the result of these coincidental dates—overlooking the fact that it was newspaper work, not electronics, that he had originally chosen for a career.

But there was no doubt that, at age thirty, David Sarnoff was already a tycoon in the making.

In a famous novel, Budd Schulberg addressed the question “what makes Sammy run?” But in the case of many of these Eastern European success stories, the question could be asked: were they running *for* something, or away from something? Unlike the stolid German Jews who had come to America intent on bettering their lot, because America was “the land of golden opportunity,” because there were nineteenth-century fortunes to be made and they fully expected to make them, the Russians had come for an entirely different set of reasons. They had come to save their lives, and their children’s lives. Success had been the last thing on their minds, much less success on the scale of a Sam Goldwyn, a Sam Bronfman, a David Sarnoff, or even a Meyer Lansky. Yet success had happened anyway, and so quickly, and almost as if by crazy luck or accident. Was this what they had wanted? Not in the beginning, surely, and now it was more than they had ever dreamed of, more than they felt psychologically comfortable with.

They came from a Russian-Jewish culture, furthermore, that for centuries had taught that there was high honor in poverty. Poverty itself was holy. The poor man was more blessed than the rich man—the Talmud taught this, and the rabbis preached it. God and Mammon could not both be worshiped. To be a Jew *was* to be poor, and to suffer. Perhaps this helps explain the curious double personalities of these early Eastern European tycoons, why they could be loving husbands and fathers at home, but hellions at the office. Sam Goldwyn also had his tender, generous side. When distant cousins in Poland heard of their relative’s success, they wrote to him, telling him their problems. He was soon sending regular gifts of money and clothing to people across the ocean whom he had never met. And yet he was a man who really believed that a “happy company” could not make a good product. Perhaps it was because America had handed men like Goldwyn more than they had asked for—more than they had been taught it was right to accept—and they were embarrassed, even ashamed, to be caught accepting it by the shades and memories of their proud, poor ancestors.

Nowhere was this Jewish dilemma more poignantly apparent than in the story of Anzia Yezierska. Touched by the golden wand of Hollywood,

handed a check for ten thousand dollars—more money than she had ever seen in her life—taken to a private lunch with Goldwyn, offered a stunning contract by William Fox, she had behaved, some might say, quite foolishly. At lunch with Goldwyn, she had babbled almost incoherently about “art.” And, offered the Fox contract, she had simply run away. After the Hollywood experience, in fact, whatever talent she may have had seemed to dry up, and it was years before she was able to write again. But Hollywood was not entirely to blame.

In 1950, sixty-five years old and virtually forgotten, she wrote a memoir, *Red Ribbon on a White Horse*, in which she tried to come to grips with what had happened all those long years ago. Flushed with excitement over her movie sale, her ten-thousand-dollar check from Goldwyn for the sale of her first novel in her hand, she had run eagerly to tell her father, expecting from him some word of praise, pride, or congratulation. She was disappointed. Her father, an Old World Jeremiah of Hester Street, spent his days at the *shul* or in his tenement flat poring over his phylacteries and holy books. Faced with his daughter’s accomplishment, he berated her mercilessly for her preoccupation with money and earthly success. A woman’s only earthly concern, he told her, was to marry and bear children. She had done neither. She might as well be dead or, worse, never have been born. As she remembered the dreadful scene:

“Woe to America!” he wailed. “Only in America could it happen—an ignorant thing like you—a writer! What do you know of life? Of history, philosophy? What do you know of the Bible, the foundation of all knowledge?”

He stood up, an ancient patriarch condemning unrighteousness. His black skullcap set off his white hair and beard. “If you only knew how deep is your ignorance—”

“What have you ever done with all your knowledge?” I demanded. “While you prayed and gloried in your Torah, your children were in the factory, slaving for bread.”

His God-kindled face towered over me. “What? Should I have sold my religion? God is not for sale. God comes before my own flesh and blood....

“You’re not human!” he went on. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Neither can good come from your evil worship of Mammon. Woe! Woe! Your barren heart looks out from your eyes.”

His words were salt on my wounds. In desperation, I picked up my purse and gloves and turned toward the door.

“I see you’re in a hurry, all ready to run away. Run! Where? For what? To get a higher place in the Tower of Babel? To make more money out of your ignorance?”

“Poverty becomes a Jew like a red ribbon on a white horse. But you’re no longer a Jew. You’re a *meshumeides*, an apostate, an enemy of your own people. And even the Christians will hate you.”

I fled from him in anger and resentment. But it was no use. I could never escape him. He was the conscience that condemned me....

What this scene illustrates is more than a clash of cultures. It is more a clash of faiths, a clash of consciences. In America, a whole history and system of beliefs was being turned upside down, and a people who had been taught to believe in an aristocracy of the poor were trying to adapt to a society that accepted an aristocracy of the rich. Anzia Yeziarska was not tough enough, not cynical enough, not heartless enough to escape her Jewish father’s “condemning conscience.” Trapped between two powerful forces, she struggled briefly, then gave up the fight.

So perhaps one of the things that made Sammy run was the searing inner doubt—a guilt that wouldn’t go away—about the worthiness of success, a very real fear that success was evil, ungodly. Assimilation was not free. One of its prices was constant inner conflict, a crisis of conscience, a divided soul.

11

DEALS

By 1928, it was clear to everyone that repeal of Prohibition was only a matter of time. It had never worked and, it seemed, could never be made to work. Though five more years would pass before Utah became the thirty-sixth state to ratify the Repeal amendment in December of 1933, those five years gave Sam Bronfman all the time he needed to draw up his plans to enter—legitimately at last—the lucrative American liquor market. In 1928, he made a decision that would transform him from a millionaire into, literally, a billionaire.

As long as Prohibition was in force, he figured, Americans would put up with “rotgut” liquor from questionable sources. But, with Repeal, he suspected that drinking tastes would demand fully aged, mellowed, and ripened whiskeys, and that Americans would willingly pay the price for these. On this theory, Bronfman began maturing huge stocks of whiskey in his Canadian warehouses. It was a gamble, of course, and there was considerable risk. It meant withholding his liquor from a lively and thirsty marketplace, and it meant that Seagram’s shareholders would have to endure some belt tightening during this uncertain period. Mr. Sam’s hunch could have been wrong. American tastes could have become so jaded during nearly fifteen years of Prohibition that the average drinker no longer cared what was in his glass. But Mr. Sam, as usual, was certain that he was not wrong. And, as a result, when liquor sales became legal in the United States once more, Seagram’s was in control of the largest stock of fully aged rye and bourbon whiskeys in the world.

Meanwhile, other preparatory steps had been taken. Office space had been rented in New York’s prestigious new Chrysler Building, then the

world's tallest skyscraper. Learning that the Rossville Union Distillery in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, was for sale, Mr. Sam bought it for \$2,399,000 in cash. And in 1930, Mr. Sam imported a bright young Scotsman named Calman Levine, and conferred upon him an Old World title Bronfman had never previously employed in his company—that of master blender.

Calman Levine had been born in Russia in 1884, and had emigrated at an early age with his family to Scotland. He was mild-mannered, well-spoken—with a British accent, which Mr. Sam admired—a man whose bearing suggested that of a university don rather than a whiskey expert. Indeed, Levine had made a long, scholarly study of liquors—not only of their physical attributes, such as taste, aroma, color, texture, and “feel,” but also of the almost spiritual associations of certain flavors, since, in the end, a blender's “nose” and palate are based on intuition more than anything else. Levine had grown up in the Scotch business. With a brother-in-law, he had worked as a blender for Ambassador Scotch, and for a while had operated his own small distillery in Glasgow, called Calman Levine and Company, which produced an elegant Scotch called Loch-broom. As the master blender for Lochbroom—most Scotch whiskeys are blends—Levine's job had been to sample, and spit out, literally thousands of different combinations a day from a huge library of little bottles before coming up with the formulas that he felt, intuitively, would be satisfactory. Mr. Sam had often talked about the “art” of blending, but he really knew very little about it. Now Calman Levine was to be his artist-in-residence. He was introduced to the Seagram staff as its prize corporate showpiece, and he certainly looked the part—a gentleman and a scholar, of all things, in the often deadly North American liquor trade. His assignment was, in a sense, twofold. His presence and his title were to be used to provide prestige and luster for the Seagram name when it made its first respectable debut in the American marketplace. And he was to create, in the process, a flagship blend to carry the Seagram banner proudly to the United States.

It took Levine nearly four years to come up with what he considered a winning formula, but there was no hurry. A master blender's art cannot be exercised under a deadline. Millions of combinations were tried in what might seem an endlessly boring routine of sniffing, sipping, rolling whiskeys on the tongue, spitting them out, making notes. But, to carry the artistic metaphor farther, there was always the artist's reward waiting

tantalizingly at the end of the search for the right arrangement of colors on the canvas. By early 1934, Levine and his staff had narrowed their choices down to some two dozen different samples, which were numbered consecutively, and long hours of comparisons began, often lasting well into the night. Finally, a decision was reached. Sample number seven was declared the winner. Now all that was left was to give the new whiskey a name. “We can’t just call it Number Seven,” someone said, to which Mr. Sam replied with a single word: “Crown.” Thus was Seagram’s Seven Crown born.

Adding the word *Crown* was characteristic of Mr. Sam. He was awed by royalty, and still harbored the fierce hope that the British Crown might one day make him a knight. “Seagram” and “Seven” were of course already alliterative, and by adding the word *Crown*, Seagram’s would be saying that this whiskey was their crowning achievement. In the process, Seagram’s would be doffing its corporate hat to the royal family. It was one of many such gestures. Earlier, Mr. Sam had bought the Chivas distillery in Aberdeen primarily because Chivas also operated a fancy-foods division that supplied groceries to the royals during their annual summer visits to Balmoral Castle. Chivas foods had thus earned the royal warrant: “Purveyors of Provisions and Victuals to H. M. the King.” Unfortunately, though he would dearly have loved to have it emblazoned on his label, Mr. Sam was never able to get a royal warrant conferred upon his Chivas Regal Scotch, though he did his best with “Regal.” Other Seagram products would similarly evoke the English aristocracy—Lord Calvert, for example, and Crown Royal, and Royal Salute.

But Seagram’s Seven Crown was a clever name for other reasons. There were, for instance, the mystical and magical connotations of the number seven—the seven seas, the seven hills of Rome, the seven arts, the seventh seal in Revelation, the seven deadly sins, and the seven trumpets signifying the consummation of God’s plan. But seven was also a popular—though for no particular reason—number of years for aging a whiskey. Seagram’s Seven Crown was not a whiskey that had been aged for seven years, nor would its advertising ever make such a claim directly.* On the other hand, if the customer chose to infer that the number was the whiskey’s age, that was all right with Seagram’s and with Mr. Sam. Mr. Sam’s next move, after having named Seven Crown, was equally adroit. He proposed that

Seagram's Seven Crown be introduced along with a second brand—Seagram's Five Crown, which would sell at a lower price. Thus the customer might harmlessly be misled into supposing that, if Seven Crown were aged for seven years, Five Crown must be aged for five. "Besides," Mr. Sam added, "I always like to have money on two horses in every race."

But when Seagram's Seven Crown and Five Crown joined the other Seagram brands—Seagram's 83, Seagram's gin, Seagram's rye, Seagram's bourbon, and Seagram's V.O.†—in the marketplace, Seven Crown was such a clear winner that there didn't seem to be any need for a second horse. Within two months, Seagram's whiskeys were outselling all others in the United States and within a decade Seagram's Seven Crown had become the best-selling whiskey in the world. Five Crown was quietly discontinued, but Calman Levine had done his job well.

In setting up his distributorships and sales force in the United States, Mr. Sam naturally turned to the men who knew the territory best. These, not surprisingly, turned out to be found among the ranks of the recently unemployed bootleggers—men who, for the previous fifteen years, had been full- or part-time criminals. Still, though the reputation of everyone in the liquor business was more than a little tainted, a facade of respectability had to be maintained. One way was through public relations and advertising, and Seagram's earliest U.S. ads were replete with Sam Bronfman's favorite themes—jeweled crowns, orbs, scepters, fancy Olde English lettering, and the slogan "Say Seagram's and Be Sure," which left the impression that other brands were not to be trusted. In Seagram's "Men of Distinction" series for its Calvert line, Seagram's traded on the reputations of prominent Americans to give its products class and tone and snob appeal.* Its Men of Distinction, the company announced, were paid for their endorsements, but in the form of contributions to their favorite charities, which all true blue bloods had. (The fact that, in a deepening economic depression, a number of Men of Distinction chose themselves as their favorite charity was no concern of Seagram's.)

Still, projecting an upper-crust image was a little hard at first. Soon after Repeal, the United States secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr.—who happened to be a German Jew—claimed that Canadian distillers such as Bronfman owed the United States some sixty-nine million dollars in duties and excise taxes on the liquor they had illegally shipped into the

country during the dry years. An angry argument between the two countries resulted, and at one point, Morgenthau threatened to impose an embargo on *all* goods imported from Canada until the alleged debt—which many thought a modest estimate of the taxes that had been evaded—was paid. At length, Ottawa agreed to pay a twentieth of the figure, or three million dollars, and Sam Bronfman agreed to pay half of that, and wrote out a check for 1.5 million. With that, he announced, he had paid his debt, even though his Seagram profits during the Prohibition years had amounted to close to eight hundred million dollars.

Throughout Prohibition, meanwhile, Mr. Sam had been fascinated with an American-born Jew named Lewis Rosenstiel. Seemingly above the law, Lew Rosenstiel had spent the Prohibition years boldly transshipping contraband liquor from England, Europe, and Canada via Saint Pierre and then, by truck, right into Cincinnati, Rosenstiel's hometown and center of operations. In the process, he was building what would become his giant Schenley Distillers Corporation. Bronfman and Rosenstiel had met often, during the latter's trips to Canada, and had become gin-rummy-playing friends.

Lew Rosenstiel, meanwhile, had a personality even more despotic and erratic than Mr. Sam's. In fact, he may have been a certifiable sociopath. Convinced that everyone in his organization was conspiring against him, he had all of his executives' telephone lines tapped, and his house was a veritable spy center. At one point during his long reign of terror, he decided to test his employees' loyalty in an ultimate fashion. He had his secretary phone his top men to tell them that the liquor baron was dying. The men gathered solemnly in their boss's drawing room. Presently the secretary appeared and murmured, "He's gone." Rosenstiel, meanwhile, was in the bedroom with his listening devices. He turned in to what was being said about him, and had the satisfaction of having all his suspicions confirmed as he heard his executives cheering and congratulating one another over the fact that the Grim Reaper had finally done what each of them had always wanted to do. Still in his pajamas, he marched down the stairs and fired the lot of them.

He had survived one stormy marriage, but his second was even stormier. He had married the former Leonore Cohn, a palely beautiful woman considerably younger than he, who had been traumatized early in life, first,

by her mother's death in an auto accident when she was a child; second, by being raised by a California uncle who happened to be the legendary despot of Columbia Pictures, Harry Cohn; and, third, by an ill-advised youthful marriage to a rich Las Vegas businessman named Belden Kattleman.

Soon she was being traumatized again by Lew Rosenstiel. Though he provided her with every conceivable kind of luxury, she was made to pay for it in humiliating ways. When she became pregnant with her second child—her first, a daughter, had been by Mr. Kattleman—Rosenstiel promised to settle a million dollars on the baby when it was born. Then, furious because it was another girl, he reneged on the promise. When she caught the eye of another very rich man, who happened to be Walter Annenberg, she asked Rosenstiel for a divorce. He refused, and instead had both his wife and Annenberg tailed by detectives in an attempt to dig up scurrilous details about the publisher's private life. Finally, Lee asked for a divorce. Enraged, Rosenstiel confiscated every article of clothing, fur, or jewelry that he had given her during the marriage. When she finally walked out of his house for good to marry Annenberg, she had to undergo the ordeal of being frisked and having her purse searched by Rosenstiel's bodyguards.

Rosenstiel and Bronfman had often discussed the possibility of joining forces, and in the early 1930s, with Repeal on the horizon, the two liquor lords had a series of meetings on the subject of a merger that, with any luck, would give them supreme control of the world's liquor market. Rosenstiel would bring to the partnership his knowledge of the U.S. trade, and Bronfman would bring to it his prestigious connections with the great distillers of Scotland. It was to be a fifty-fifty partnership, and, to this end, Seagram's began buying Schenley stock in 1933.

But negotiations began to break down when it suddenly turned out that each man wanted fifty-*one* percent of the proposed merger, and, naturally, neither was the sort of man who would accept a mere forty-nine percent. And things came to a screaming finish when Mr. Sam visited one of Schenley's plants and discovered that at least one Schenley brand, Golden Wedding, was being bottled "hot"—right out of the stills, without aging. Sam had done this, too, of course, in the old days, but now he was going legitimate, respectable, and this sort of practice did not at all fit in with the aristocratic image he wanted Seagram to project. Bronfman accused Rosenstiel of lying to him, of trying to cheat him, of selling cheap rotgut,

and Rosenstiel countered by calling Mr. Sam a number of unprintable names. In a final meeting on the subject of a merger, the two hurled curses and insults at each other, each man accused the other of having carnal knowledge of his mother, and each man vowed to destroy the other for all time.

Afterward, whenever Rosenstiel spoke of Mr. Sam it was as “Sam the Bronf.” Bronfman’s name for Rosenstiel was “Rosenschlemiel,” or, simply, “My enemy.” The result of the falling out was furious competition between the two giants for a larger share of the market, and a conviction on the part of both Seagram’s and Schenley’s that spies from the enemy were infiltrating their respective organizations, that certain employees were possibly “double agents.” Valuable employees were forever being lured from one house to the other with offers of money on the theory that they would share their secrets.

But it was a curious kind of enmity in that it lasted only during business hours. Like Sam Goldwyn and L. B. Mayer, who fought furiously all day long and yet spent many pleasant evenings together playing cards, Mr. Sam and Lew Rosenstiel remained—on a purely social level—backslapping pals. Neither man had anything but abuse for the other from nine to five. But evenings and weekends they still played gin rummy.

And of course it was part of the nature of the liquor business that there *were* many secrets, many mysteries, many skeletons in closets. Prohibition had made it a business of bribes, payoffs, secret deals, possibilities for blackmail. Whenever he traveled, for example, Mr. Sam insisted that Seagram brands be placed prominently front and center, their labels facing squarely outward, on bartenders’ shelves and in the window displays of liquor stores. This meant that advance men had to be sent on ahead of Mr. Sam’s visits, and that cash had to be passed under retailers’ and bartenders’ counters. Mr. Sam, furthermore, refused to believe—or pretended to refuse to believe—that such bribes were necessary, and refused to reimburse his men for these outlays, which meant that his men, to stay in his good graces, were required to make these payments out of their own pockets.

Then there was the curious matter of Mr. Julius Kessler—a mysterious case that is still occasionally pondered by old-timers at Seagram’s, along with the question of who murdered Paul Matoff, and why. Kessler was a spendthrift, devil-may-care fellow who came out of the old Whiskey Trust,

much loved for his habit of cheerfully giving away money to almost anyone who asked. Then the brief economic depression of 1921 plunged his already shaky liquor business into bankruptcy. For a while, he tried other fields, including selling corsets, but with little success, and finally he announced his intention to retire to Budapest, where food and wine and women were cheap. Whatever funds he had left he put in the care of a longtime secretary, one Miss Bohmer, in New York. Whenever Julius Kessler needed money, Miss Bohmer cabled it to him.

One day in 1930 a mysterious visitor, identified only as “a Hungarian,” appeared at Miss Bohmer’s office and asked to borrow two hundred thousand dollars of Julius Kessler’s money. Miss Bohmer cabled Kessler for instructions. Rather testily, Kessler cabled back that the Hungarian was his friend, and that she should give the man whatever he wanted. Miss Bohmer wrote out the two-hundred-thousand-dollar check, and then wired Kessler to tell him that that was the end of his American money supply. Kessler replied that he was aware of this, and Miss Bohmer then wanted to know how her salary was to be paid. It wasn’t, Kessler informed her in his cabled response. He had no further need for a secretary. She was fired. Miss Bohmer, a spinster who had spent many years in Kessler’s service, went home that night and, apparently despondent, swallowed a bottle of poison, and died.

Over the next two or three years, Kessler made occasional visits to the United States to look up old friends in the liquor business and to offer his services as a “consultant” for as little as two hundred dollars a month. He was by then almost eighty, and most of his old friends, embarrassed for him, pushed checks across their desks for him while declining his services. Proudly, Kessler tore up the checks and returned to Budapest, and poverty.

Then, in 1934, a mutual friend of Kessler’s and Sam Bronfman’s named Emil Schwartzhaupt (the mysterious “Hungarian,” perhaps?) came to Mr. Sam with a suggestion that something be done to help out the aging, ne’er-do-well Kessler. Surprisingly—since Mr. Sam barely knew Kessler—Mr. Sam immediately agreed, saying that “to do this good deed would redound to the credit of the Industry.” He then announced the creation, as a subsidiary of the Seagram Corporation, of the Kessler Distilling Corporation, with Julius Kessler as its president and chairman of the board. Master Blender Calman Levine was assigned the job of creating a new

blend, to be called Kessler's Special, which was to be of high quality but to sell in the medium-price range. It was a difficult assignment, but Levine eventually came up with a formula that satisfied all the requirements—a superior blend that would be affordable by the workingman.

Levine even stepped outside his normal field of expertise and designed a special bottle and a special label for Kessler's Special, with Mr. Sam kibitzing over his shoulder, saying, "Make the name 'Kessler' bigger—bigger." Together, they planned an elaborate advertising and promotion campaign, and a national marketing strategy for Kessler's Special. In fact, no one at Seagram's could recall Mr. Sam's working so hard over, and giving so much of his personal time to, the launching of a new brand since the Crown brands had been introduced. Even more unusual was the use of the Kessler name on the label. No Seagram brands had ever been given names that sounded remotely Jewish. There was no whiskey called "Bronfman's Special," nor did the Bronfman name appear, even in the tiniest print, on any Seagram label. Why was Mr. Sam so intent on immortalizing this elderly gentleman?

Mr. Sam even announced that, from now on, Kessler's Special was going to be his personal drink. When the new brand, amid much publicity and hoopla, appeared on the shelves, it was an immediate and huge success. Julius Kessler, in his eighties, became a millionaire. He also became an instant old friend, despite the disparity in their ages—Mr. Sam was then in his lusty early forties—of Sam and Saidye Bronfman, and became a frequent houseguest at Belvedere Palace in Montreal. In fact, Julius Kessler became a part of a frequently told Bronfman family story—told to illustrate the early signs of business acumen on the part of Mr. Sam's elder son Edgar, even as a little boy. Little Edgar, then about six, admired a musical watch that Julius Kessler wore on a watch chain. Kessler said that, if Edgar liked the watch, he would give it to him as a bar mitzvah gift. Said Edgar, "But you're an old man now, and you may not be here for my bar mitzvah." With that, Kessler removed the watch and presented it to Edgar Bronfman on the spot.

Along the corridors of Seagram's, of course, there were many jokes about Kessler's Special. "Kessler certainly *is* special," they said, "special to Mr. Sam." That the boss should have made such a Herculean effort, at such great expense, just to help out an octogenarian whom everyone else had

written off as a loser seemed inexplicable. Good deeds on such a scale were not at all Mr. Sam's style. Unless, of course, there was blackmail involved, and Kessler "had something" on Mr. Sam from Prohibition days, when, it was assumed, there had been much dirty work at the crossroads that Kessler could have known about.

There were a number of intriguing pieces to the puzzle, but no clear solution. Who, for instance, was the mysterious Hungarian? Was he part of the scheme, and was the two hundred thousand dollars his fee for helping Mr. Kessler bring it off? But four years had elapsed between the Hungarian's loan and Mr. Sam's magnanimous gesture. Or was this time merely allowed for the scent to cool? And what was to be made of Miss Bohmer's sudden suicide? True, it was 1930, the Great Depression was settling in, her longtime boss had treated her very shabbily, and she may have felt at the end of her rope. Or was it not really a suicide at all? Did Miss Bohmer, in underworld terms, "know too much," and need to be got rid of?

Then there was the ambiguous role of Emil Schwartzhaupt, the first to suggest the good deed to Mr. Sam. That same year, 1934, Mr. Sam concluded a—for him—rather unusual business deal with Mr. Schwartzhaupt. Schwartzhaupt owned the Calvert distillery at Relay, Maryland, and Mr. Sam wanted to buy it. Instead of making Schwartzhaupt an offer, which would have been customary, and waiting for Schwartzhaupt to come back with a higher price, then agreeing on a figure in the middle, Mr. Sam told Schwartzhaupt to name his figure. Whatever it was, Mr. Sam would pay it. There would be none of the usual haggling. Schwartzhaupt named his price, and was paid. Later, Schwartzhaupt would grumble that he had probably named too low an amount.

Mr. Schwartzhaupt, however, had done all right. He had already become the second-largest shareholder in Schenley's, having sold his Bernheim Distilling Company in Louisville to Lew Rosenstiel, Mr. Sam's bitter rival.

The year 1934, the first full year of Repeal, was a hectic one throughout the revived American liquor industry, a year of fast deals, scrambling for markets, price wars, hastily patched together new laws and regulations, and sudden changes. Many facts that might have come to light were irretrievably lost in the shuffle of that uncertain year, and all the principals in the Kessler affair are now dead. The Seagram Corporation, in response to

queries, remains officially unaware of any underhanded dealings that may or may not have gone on, but is also unwilling to forward such queries to the Distilled Spirits Institute, of which Seagram's is a member. Seagrams offers only one explanation for Mr. Sam's beneficence to Julius Kessler: it was a "good deed."

If so, Mr. Sam was certainly consistent. Even after Julius Kessler's death, Mr. Sam remained loyal to Kessler's Special whiskey, and devoted special attention to the way the brand was marketed and promoted, loudly announcing, "A Kessler's and soda, please!" whenever he ordered a drink in a public bar or restaurant. But then, after all, Kessler's whiskey had become a money-maker for Seagram's. It still is.

But Mr. Sam himself may have had the last word on the whole subject. Looking over the galley proofs of his company's carefully laundered official history that was to be included in one of Seagram's annual reports to its stockholders, Mr. Sam slammed the pages down and said, "This is so much bullshit. If I only told the truth, I'd sell ten million copies!"

As the dark years of the 1930s marched forward in Europe, and as Nazi Germany grew in power, more and more American Jews were becoming aware of the increasingly institutionalized anti-Semitism that would lead to Hitler's Final Solution for the Jews of Europe. By 1933, it was apparent that Hitler's rantings were more than political rhetoric, and Americans were warily eyeing the deteriorating situation in central Europe. That was the year when Rose Pastor Stokes became ill, and her malady was diagnosed as cancer of the breast. A physician in Germany had announced great strides in the treatment of cancer—the doctors of Germany were still considered the finest in the world—and her husband and friends decided that she should be sent to Germany for medical care. There was no small amount of risk, to be sure, because of the Nazis, and there was also the problem that neither Rose nor her husband had any money.

In April of that year some five hundred of her old friends and admirers held a meeting at New York's Webster Hall to try to raise funds for the trip abroad. The chairman of the gathering, Alexander Trachtenberg, claimed that Rose's cancer had been caused by the brutal kicking and beating she had received from a policeman during the garment strike in 1917. Her new husband confirmed the incident, but said that it was probably just a

contributing factor. Enough money was raised to send Rose to the German doctor.

Though she was only fifty-three, she now looked much older. Her famous mane of Titian hair had turned mousy and was streaked with gray, and she wore it carelessly, pulled back with pins and combs. She seemed to have lost all interest in her once-lovely appearance, and the wonderfully delicate and slender figure that *Harper's Bazar* had written so admiringly about in 1905 had gone heavy. Her face—she wore no makeup—was lined, and there were dark circles under her eyes. The face, though fuller, coarser, also seemed saddened and sunken from the weight of lost causes. She seemed to have been defeated by both love and time.

Though she had been called a traitoress and a seditionist, Rose was at heart a patriotic woman. Her patriotism—and that of her fellow founders of the American Communist party—was perhaps idealized, unrealistic, impractical. She saw American society as flawed, but the remedies she fought for were for all Americans, not just Jewish Americans. She had foreseen a social revolution in America, and of course her vision was faulty. In 1933, with fifteen million Americans out of work, the country was probably closer to a revolution than at any other point in its history. But it would not happen.

Once in Germany, her whereabouts were kept secret to protect her from harassment. But it was announced that she was sending home two trunkfuls of papers—an autobiography that she was writing. If the papers were sent, they never arrived. She died in Germany on June 20, 1933, and her crusade—which she herself may not have altogether understood—was ended.

On July 24, about four hundred of her fellow Communists met in a drab old hall called the New Star Casino on 107th Street and Park Avenue, at the seedy fringes of Harlem, for a memorial service. Though no note was made of it, it was just a few days past what would have been her twenty-eighth wedding anniversary to James Graham Phelps Stokes, whose Old New York name she had continued to wear so proudly, and her own fifty-fourth birthday. It was noticed that most of those in attendance were women. Rose's ashes had been flown home from Germany, and her urn was carried in a procession by a special escort and placed on a red-draped card table on a platform. Two prominent members of the Party, Clara Zetkin and Sergei

Gussev, made short speeches. A chorus sang revolutionary songs —“Meadowlands,” and “The Peat-Bog Soldiers.”

Then the audience stood at attention, in silence, for one full minute. The Romance of the Century, and the Cinderella Story of the Lower East Side, was over.

Later, it was announced that the writing of a biography of Rose Pastor Stokes was “in the hands” of a man named Cedric Belfrage, who was the author of a book called *South of God*. The biography has never appeared.

*There were ways to make the claim subliminally, however. In 1941, an advertising campaign was headlined “Seven Yeats.” In smaller print, the copy revealed it meant seven years “since Repeal.”

†Another somewhat misleading brand name. A number of European liquors, particularly brandies and cognacs, used initials following their names—“V.S.O.P.,” for example, which stands for Very Special Old Pale. Most people not in the know assumed that “V.O.” stood for “Very Old.” In fact, Sam Bronfman had inherited the label from old Joe Seagram’s days in the nineteenth century, and he was said to have used the initials to stand for “Very Own.”

*Interestingly, there was never a Jewish Man of Distinction.

12

WAR

As the news from Hitler's Germany grew more alarming, a number of American Jews wondered why no voices of protest had been raised from a number of important places. President Roosevelt had said nothing, and neither had Stalin, nor the Pope. It seemed to many people that a cry of outrage from at least one major world power might give Hitler pause, and persuade him to change his course, but the world powers remained strangely silent, pursuing some sort of policy of wait and see. Hitler, the Jews pointed out, was a man who had shown he could be cowed by much lesser men. Generalissimo Franco had stopped Hitler's army at the Spanish border with what amounted to no more than a lot of double-talk. And when the Germans had told the king of little Denmark that they could "cleanse" Denmark of its Jews, the king had replied firmly that the Danes would never stand for such a crime against humanity, nor would he. He himself had put on the identifying Jewish yellow armband, and urged his subjects to do the same. They did, and the Danish Jews were allowed to live. Why couldn't President Roosevelt take such a stand? If he wouldn't, it behooved wealthy Jews in North America to do what they could on their own.

For the Jewish fraternity of motion picture producers in Hollywood, however, this was a very ticklish subject. They had so convinced themselves that the success of their movies depended on the movies' non-Jewish character that they were reluctant, no matter how it might trouble the conscience, to step forward and identify themselves with Jewish causes, no matter how urgent.

Furthermore, their attitude was reinforced by none other than the man whom Roosevelt had appointed as ambassador to the Court of St. James's in

1937—Joseph P. Kennedy. Just back from London, Kennedy had called a secret meeting with some fifty of Hollywood's leading motion picture men, including Goldwyn, Mayer, the Schencks, the Warners, Fox, and Zukor. In firm tones, Kennedy had told them that, as Jews, they must not protest what was going on in Germany, and must keep their Jewish fury out of print and off the screen. Any Jewish protests, Kennedy insisted, would make a victory over the Germans impossible. It would make the world—and the United States public in particular—feel that what was going on in Europe was “a Jewish war,” and a Jewish war would not be a popular idea, would actually increase anti-Semitic feeling in the United States. Kennedy delivered the same argument to a group of New York's Jewish businessmen in the banking and fashion industries. In New York and Hollywood, the leading Jews quietly agreed to Kennedy's plea for silence, and to keep any Jewish feelings, along with their Jewishness, under wraps. Whatever Kennedy's intentions may have been, it was curious, even chilling, advice.

But it was advice that many Hollywood men were probably somewhat relieved to hear. It eased them of some guilt they might have felt, and after all, it came from a very highly placed source. Not only was Kennedy very rich, but he was also a high government official. Furthermore, he was a power on Wall Street, where he had headed the Securities and Exchange Commission, and much in Hollywood rode on what Wall Street said. He was also a considerable force in the motion picture business, thanks to, of all people, David Sarnoff.

Back in the 1920s, Sarnoff had predicted that the radio and the phonograph would be combined, and that a national network—or “chain,” as he called it—of radio stations would be created, whereby a program originating in, say, New York, could be transmitted simultaneously from a series of high-wattage towers across the country. With the advent of sound in motion pictures, Sarnoff saw that talking pictures meant business for RCA, too, since all the components that went into sound for movies were actually by-products of radio science. Sarnoff had proposed that RCA get a foothold in the movie business, and with that in mind he approached Joe Kennedy in 1927.

Kennedy owned a substantial piece of a small production company called Film Booking Office, which had a friendly relationship with the large Keith-Albee-Orpheum chain of theaters. Kennedy also had an interest in

another film company, called Pathé Pictures. At the time, however, Kennedy's interest in films seemed mostly to be based on his relationship with Gloria Swanson, and his desire to promote her career. David Sarnoff proposed to Kennedy that, with half a million dollars of RCA's money thrown into the pot to sweeten the deal, Film Booking Office, Pathé, and Keith-Albee-Orpheum might be merged to form a new studio that would rival the existing Big Five. Kennedy liked the idea, and the result of the merger was RKO Pictures (Radio-Keith-Orpheum). It was certainly a nice thing for Kennedy, who saw his RKO stock climb from twenty-one to fifty dollars a share just before the Crash, when he sold out at the top.

Later, Kennedy would claim that the idea for forming RKO was his own, but his biographer, Richard J. Whalen, in *The Founding Father*, refuted this, and called the creation of the new company "Sarnoff's grand design." For such coups as this, Sarnoff was rewarded with the presidency of RCA in 1930. And in Hollywood, where Kennedy made himself president of RKO, there was awe. Adolph Zukor had asked, "A banker? A banker in this business? I thought this was a business for furriers."

Kennedy, when not telling Hollywood producers what they should or shouldn't do, could also be very useful to his movie friends. As ambassador, he had made high-level connections in London, and England at the time was the second most important market for American-made films. In a confidential memo to Sam Goldwyn, Joseph M. Schenck in MGM's New York office was able to report that, working through State Department channels—and in coded telegrams that Kennedy had let Schenck see—Kennedy was developing a formula whereby the film industry could withdraw, and transfer out of England, much more money than had been allowed by law. A five-million-dollar ceiling had been in force for such withdrawals, but Kennedy had assured Schenck that this ceiling could be raised to between twenty and thirty million. Furthermore, the money would come out of England in dollars, not English pounds, which was important since the pound was in a weakened, war-frightened state. Schenck warned Goldwyn not to try to interfere with Kennedy's plans since, as Schenck put it, Kennedy was a "tough customer and resents anyone who tries to go over his head or that of the State Department." In his ambassadorial role, Kennedy would deal directly with the British chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Simon. Was any of this legal? Who knew? But it did seem an odd

bit of extracurricular activity for our American ambassador. And it showed that Hollywood was more than a little frightened of Mr. Joseph P. Kennedy.

Kennedy would prove helpful to his Hollywood colleagues in still other ways. Following Repeal, like others in the liquor trade, Kennedy had become a legitimate importer, and an important new source of Kennedy wealth became the importation of a Scotch whiskey called Black Tartan. When Britain declared war on Germany in 1939, Scotch became a very difficult commodity to obtain in the United States. While other American distillers experimented with something called “Scotch-type whiskey,” a very poor imitation, those who had connections with Ambassador Kennedy never had any trouble getting the real thing. It was said that the Beverly Hills Hotel was one of the few places in the country where, throughout the war, good Scotch was always available, and it was always Black Tartan. How it arrived, other than by diplomatic pouch, has never been made clear.

Hollywood’s Jews reacted to Kennedy’s edict of silence on the subject of Hitler’s treatment of the Jews in different ways. Sam Goldwyn, for example, rationalized that reports of concentration camps and mass murders were “probably exaggerated,” and others took this comforting view. But at least one man decided not to be daunted by Kennedy and to be vocal on the subject—the volatile screenwriter Ben Hecht. Born in New York of Russian immigrant parents, Hecht had become something of a Hollywood maverick and gadfly. In various articles for newspapers and in the *Reader’s Digest*, Hecht had begun to complain about the process of “de-Semitization” he was observing in the popular arts, and “the almost complete disappearance of the Jew from American fiction, stage, and movies.” It was a process, he claimed, that was designed to stifle any outrage over Hitler’s Jewish policies, and to minimize, as much as possible, the human connotations of the word *Jew*. In Hollywood, however, Ben Hecht was considered a little crazy, as, indeed, all writers were. (“No writers at story conferences!” had been one of Sam Goldwyn’s famous rules.)

But Hecht’s protestations had brought him to the attention of a young Jewish activist named Peter Bergson. Bergson, a Palestinian, was a member of the Irgun Tzevai Leumi, the armed, anti-British organization that had been founded by Menachem Begin to aid Israel’s struggle for freedom. Members of the Bergson group had come to the United States to raise money for the Jewish forces in Palestine. Bergson himself had been a

disciple of a militant Zionist named Vladimir Jabotinsky, who had been born in Odessa but grew up in Italy, where he had been strongly influenced by the risorgimento. In Palestine, Jabotinsky had organized a Jewish legion, which had done a great deal to bolster Jewish morale, but which had come on the scene too late to do much damage to the Turks or to dislodge the British presence. Jabotinsky was convinced that Jewish armed forces were essential to the creation of a Jewish state, much to the displeasure of more conservative Zionists, such as Chaim Weizmann and Louis Brandeis. The trouble was that Zionists were divided as to priorities. Some felt that the creation of the State of Israel should come first, in order to give Europe's Jews a place to which to emigrate. Others felt that the more pressing task was saving Jewish lives at any cost.

Early in 1940, Jabotinsky came to the United States, and before a cheering audience of thousands of Jews at Madison Square Garden, urged that the only solution to the plight of Europe's Jews was the creation of a Jewish army to fight alongside the Allies as an independent unit, like the Free French. Such an army, Jabotinsky asserted, would put the lie forever to the claim that Jews made poor soldiers. Though Jabotinsky thrilled his audience in New York, the British Foreign Office was less pleased with his crusade. In London, it was feared—with some justification, as it turned out—that what Jabotinsky really had in mind was a Jewish brigade formed, trained, paid for, and equipped by Britain, which would later be used to seize Palestine from British guardianship. Already, in Palestine, the British had enacted a number of anti-Semitic laws. For one thing, it had been stipulated that only one Jew could volunteer for His Majesty's army for each Arab who enlisted. Since no Arabs were joining, this meant that no Jews could, either. In London, Jabotinsky had been labeled a "Jewish Fascist." A few months after his Madison Square Garden appearance, however, Jabotinsky died of a heart attack. The banner for a Jewish army was taken up by Peter Bergson.

Sparked by Ben Hecht's articles, Bergson contacted Hecht and met with him in New York, and immediately asked him to be the American leader of the great cause. Funds were needed, not only for the Jewish army but also to mount an extensive campaign of demonstrations and newspaper advertisements to alert the American public to the plight of Europe's Jews. Some of the richest Jews in America, Bergson pointed out, were in

Hollywood, and Hecht, with all his “powerful connections” in the movie capital, could surely and with ease extract “millions” from the Jewish moguls there. Bergson, of course, had a rather unrealistic grasp of Hecht’s standing in the Hollywood community. Hecht was a mere writer, which fact alone placed him close to the bottom of the Hollywood pecking order. Furthermore, in 1940, Hecht was struggling with a reputation for “unreliability,” and was then seriously on the outs with at least two important producers, for allegedly having botched a rewrite job on a film called *Lullaby*. Also, Bergson was probably overestimating the wealth of the studio heads. Though they paid themselves huge salaries and lived like kings, most, like Sam Goldwyn, were at the same time heavily in debt to New York and California banks.

Still, flattery has always been an important means of persuasion, and no doubt Hecht was delighted to hear from Bergson that he was a figure of such importance. Without hesitation, Hecht accepted the chairmanship of the Jewish army cause and, early in 1941, headed for the West Coast to press his cause with the producers.

The initial response was far from encouraging. In fact, it was loud and angry. Harry Warner, for one, ordered Hecht out of his office and threatened to call the police. The general reaction was: was Ben Hecht out of his mind? Jews fighting as Jews? If Jews wanted to fight, they could fight as Americans or Englishmen. If the British weren’t allowing the Palestinian Jews to fight, should American Jews tell a great nation like Britain how to run a war? If the Hollywood studio heads criticized the British, with whose ordeal everyone in America sympathized, the Jews would be hated even more. Not mentioned was the matter of Joe Kennedy, whose covert operations with London promised a means of drawing more movie receipts out of British escrow, and who had made it perfectly clear that Hollywood’s Jews should maintain as low an anti-Hitler profile as possible. It was practically a matter of United States foreign policy. Yes, Hecht found, Jews were always willing to help other Jews in trouble, but not to help Jews *make* trouble. He called on twenty different studio heads, including Mayer and Goldwyn, but the response to his campaign was uniformly and resoundingly negative.

Wearily, Hecht took up the matter with his friends, the director Ernst Lubitsch, the only Hollywood Jew who seemed remotely supportive of

Hecht's position. After Hecht recited his litany of failures with one powerful man after another, Lubitsch expressed surprise that Hecht had not contacted David O. Selznick, who was by then one of the mightiest men in town. Selznick was still riding on the crest of his 1939 hit, *Gone with the Wind*, which was threatening to become one of the biggest grossers in film history. Himself the son of a pioneer producer, Lewis Selznick, David Selznick had also made the closest thing to a Hollywood dynastic marriage, to Louis B. Mayer's daughter Irene. Now, in the wake of such successes, David Selznick might be the one man with the courage of his convictions; might be willing to stand up and be counted as a Jew. If, Lubitsch pointed out, someone of David Selznick's stature could be persuaded to sign a telegram as cosponsor, with Hecht, of a rally for the cause of a Jewish army, then everyone in Hollywood—stars, directors, studio heads, the press—would turn out for it. In Hollywood, an invitation from Selznick was a command. Ben Hecht related what happened in his memoirs:

I called on David the next day and was happy to find there was no cringing stowaway in my friend. Nevertheless, he was full of arguments. They were not the arguments of a Jew, but of a non-Jew.

"I don't want anything to do with your cause," said David, "for the simple reason that it's a Jewish political cause. And I am not interested in Jewish political problems. I'm an American and not a Jew. I'm interested in this war as an American. It would be silly of me to pretend suddenly that I'm a Jew, with some sort of full-blown Jewish psychology."

"If I can prove you are a Jew, David," I said, "will you sign the telegram as cosponsor with me?"

"How are you going to prove it?" he asked.

"I'll call up any three people you name," I said, "and ask them the following question—What would you call David O. Selznick, an American or a Jew? If any of the three answers that he'd call you an American, you win. Otherwise, you sign the telegram."

David agreed to the test and picked out three names. I called them with David eavesdropping on an extension.

Martin Quigley, publisher of the *Motion Picture Exhibitors' Herald*, answered my question promptly.

“I’d say David Selznick was a Jew,” he said.

Nunnally Johnson hemmed a few moments but finally offered the same reply. Leland Hayward answered, “For God’s sake, what’s the matter with David? He’s a Jew and he knows it.”

As Lubitsch had predicted, with David Selznick’s name at the bottom of the telegram along with Hecht’s, acceptances to the Jewish army rally poured in from all over town. Sam Goldwyn wired back immediately to “accept with pleasure this worthy cause,” and then spent several hours with his wife, fussing over what she should wear to the event—whether she should “dress rich,” or “dress poor.” The Hecht-Selznick telegram seemed to find even Harry Warner in a more receptive mood, and even though he had ordered Hecht ejected from his office a few weeks earlier when the same subject had been broached, he now replied that he would be absolutely delighted to attend. So did Charlie Chaplin, which was an even greater surprise. Chaplin had always avoided attending anything that smacked of being a “Jewish affair,” lest he give credence to the rumor, which had persisted for years, that he was a crypto-Jew. The magical name of Selznick had done the trick.

The rally was held in the commissary of Twentieth Century–Fox on a balmy spring night in 1941. The first speaker was Senator Claude Pepper of Florida, who had dined earlier at the Lakeview Country Club while his California hosts for the evening waited outside—in accordance with the restricted club’s policy that no Jews could be admitted to the dining room. Pepper, in silver tones, spoke warmly of the virtues and culture of Jews and their role in history but, to the disappointment of Hecht and Peter Bergson, failed to touch on the subject of a Jewish army. Next on the dais was Colonel John H. Patterson, DSO, of the British army, who, during World War I, had commanded the Jewish Legion when it crossed the Red Sea and entered Palestine. Colonel Patterson, in full uniform and emblazoned with medals and decorations, was an imposing figure, and as he rose to speak, he was given a standing ovation as befitted a true British hero on a night when the well-being of Britain was foremost in every American’s thoughts.

As the colonel began developing his remarks, however, there were looks of confusion and distress among his audience. He began by extolling the bravery of the Jewish Legion and of Vladimir Jabotinsky. He then turned to a detailed account of how Jabotinsky had been mistreated by the British. The British, the good colonel went on to say, were basically anti-Semites, and after the Jewish Legion had bravely entered Palestine, Britain had tried to degrade the legion to a mere labor battalion. He went on to cite instance after instance of British foul play and anti-Semitism, and from there he moved to the subject of the British pledge to the Jews to make Palestine their homeland. The British were actually intending to do nothing of the kind, the colonel asserted. Instead, under the guise of policing and protecting the land, they were preparing to take over Palestine and drive the Jews out. On and on went Colonel Patterson, denouncing the treacherous, duplicitous, perfidious British—his own countrymen and country!—and the British hatred of the Jews.

Of course there was more than a little truth in what the colonel was saying, and he may have supposed that his obvious philo-Semitism would win him a sympathetic audience. But his timing could not have been worse. Though America had not yet entered the war, there was no question of which side Americans would fight for, if and when it did. Earlier in the year, President Roosevelt had proposed the Lend-Lease program to aid Britain and its allies in the struggle against the Axis powers. Colonel Patterson's audience could not believe its ears. No one had been remotely prepared for anything like this. It was all right for the colonel to love and admire the Jews—but at the expense of America's best friend? It was unthinkable, particularly tonight, while the British were undergoing what Churchill would call their finest hour. Now was the time to forgive Britain for its sins of commission and omission in the past. Suddenly there were boos and catcalls from the audience. Sam Goldwyn rose to his feet and commanded the speaker to "sit down! Sit down!" A number of people headed for the door—at least one to place a telephone call to the FBI to report the outrageous goings-on at the Fox commissary—but still the speaker continued, laying bare more and more examples of the blackness of the British soul. When he finally concluded, there was a stunned silence among what remained of the audience, and no applause. Hecht and Bergson fidgeted in their seats, and David Selznick threw his cohort a murderous

look. He had been right. It was a time when Jews wished to be Americans first, Jews second.

There were more speakers on the program, including Burgess Meredith, Peter Bergson, and Hecht, each of whom did his best to salvage what was left of the evening. When the speeches were over, there was general confusion in the commissary until one clear voice rose above the audience. It belonged to, of all people, Hedda Hopper, the gossip columnist, who said crisply, “We’re here to contribute to a cause. I’ll start the contributions with a check for three hundred dollars.” And Miss Hopper was not even Jewish. Immediately the remaining movie moguls, not to be outdone by a woman and a *goy* at that, began pledging contributions. These ranged from a hundred dollars up to five thousand dollars—though Hecht was somewhat sorry to notice that among the five-thousand-dollar pledgers were men like Gregory Ratoff, Sam Spiegel, and one or two others who were known at the time to be in a state of questionable solvency. Nonetheless, in the space of an hour, \$130,000 had been pledged.

It was not the “millions” Bergson had hoped for, of course, nor was it sufficient to finance an army. But it did seem sufficient to make the evening a moderate success. In the weeks that followed, however, when Hecht and his committee attempted to get the movie men to make good on their pledges, the true state of affairs was revealed. Many reneged. In the end, only nine thousand dollars was collected in cash, not enough for a full-page ad in the *New York Times*.

In Yiddish, the expression is *sha-sha*, which can be loosely translated as hush-hush, don’t say it. In the early months of 1941 America was whipping itself into a near-hysterical frenzy of patriotism, and any sentiments that were not profoundly and resoundingly pro-American came across as disloyal or even treasonous. Just a few months earlier, the America First Committee had formally announced its existence—a curious mixture of people who traditionally feared “foreign entanglements,” along with political radicals and pacifists, and some who were probably secretly, if not openly, pro-German. The most celebrated America Firster was the all-American-boy hero from America’s heartland, Charles A. Lindbergh, who on September 14 of that year would make a speech in Des Moines, Iowa, that certainly *sounded* like anti-Semitism. So this was not the time to stir up

Jewish political causes. It was *sha-sha* time, not for Jews themselves, but for Jewishness.

In Hollywood, there was particular reason for fear. Whether as a direct result of the meeting at the Fox commissary or not, a few months later, in August, and three thousand miles away, in Washington, the United States Senate was pushing through Senate Resolution Number 152, authorizing “an investigation of propaganda disseminated by the motion picture industry tending to influence participation of the United States in the present European war.” The resolution was spearheaded by Senator Bennett Champ Clark of Missouri, an America Firster, who said, “What I am protesting about is the control of a great agency of propaganda in the hands of a small monopolistic group undertaking to plunge this country into war.” Though Senator Clark seemed not to have understood Hollywood’s attitude toward the war very well, and though he made no specific mention of Jews, his comments also had anti-Semitic overtones, as he spoke darkly of “propaganda that reaches weekly the eyes and ears of one hundred million people ... in the hands of groups interested in involving the United States in war,” and of “Powers ... real or potential, partial or whole, economic, political, or social, and trade practices, organizations of motion picture producers,” and so on, which made the movie men sound like part of an evil conspiracy, or at the very least a cabal.

Within four months, of course, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, and America was in the war without the moviemakers’ help. The America First Committee, stranded without a cause, disbanded, and the Senate investigation, much to Senator Clark’s disappointment, was called off. In Hollywood, the movie people turned their talents to making a long stream of patriotic wartime films.

Nor did the Jewish army in World War II ever come to be. Peter Bergson would claim that the movement had been effectively and finally killed by the American Zionists, led by Rabbi Stephen Wise, who had tried to link the rescue of Europe’s Jews with the Jewish emigration to Palestine, thereby distracting attention from the mounting Holocaust. “The Zionists,” Bergson said, “fought the project not because they are against it, but because they are against us. Stephen Wise will not tolerate any other Jewish organization working for Palestine and stealing honors and publicity from him.” If true, this would constitute a sad irony. And yet, that there was an

American government effort to save the Jews at all—that there was, for example, a War Refugee Board that sponsored the Raul Wallenberg mission to rescue the Hungarian Jews—was largely due to the efforts of Peter Bergson’s group. But, Bergson has added, “If the Jewish leadership [in America] would have acted, the number of survivors would have been double, triple, fourfold.” And, in his most chilling indictment, Bergson has said that if he were an American Jewish leader during the wartime period, “I would be turning in my grave.”

This was a harsh judgment, perhaps too harsh. Bergson, after all, was an outsider, not an American, and, given hindsight, any judgment is possible. It was a curious and sinister confluence of forces—some logical and necessary, some mad—that was coming together in 1941. It was triangular, and could almost be diagramed. Britain was at war with Germany; Germany had embarked upon its systematic program to annihilate the Jews of Europe; in Palestine, Jewish guerrillas were fighting the British to establish a homeland for the Jews. The three forces seemed unconnected, except by time, yet disaster seemed inevitable somewhere along the way. It was small wonder that American Jews were faced with an almost numbing dilemma of choices, of priorities, of loyalties. And compounding the dilemma was the longing of the American Jews to be assimilated into the American culture, to be considered loyal Americans, and to forget the past.

In California, one symbol of assimilation—or the extent of it—was the Hillcrest Country Club of Los Angeles. Prosperous Americans, the Eastern European Jews had discovered, enjoyed a country club society, and the East Europeans had eagerly taken up the popular American country club sports—golf, tennis, swimming, riding. In Hollywood, the joke was that the movie tycoons had gone “from Poland to polo in one generation.” But in Los Angeles, as in other cities, the leading Christian club, the Los Angeles Country Club, would not accept Jews, not even as guests of members, and an unwritten rule excluded anyone in the movie business (though an exception was made in the case of Walt Disney). So the Jews of Hollywood had formed Hillcrest, a country club of their own.

Hillcrest, like other Jewish country clubs formed in the 1920s and 1930s, was not only designed to make the best of a poor situation. It was built out of Jews’ deep inner convictions that any attempts to join the Christian

community, on a social level, were probably doomed to failure. And it was also built out of the belief that, since this was America, the prosperous Jew was entitled to his own separate but equal country club facility, where Jews could enjoy American pastimes in an American setting while not obtruding upon the established ways of the Christian majority.

In the process, Hillcrest became far more separate from than equal to the Los Angeles Country Club. Since it was newer, its facilities were far more modern and luxurious than the Los Angeles Country Club's, and its kitchens produced some of the finest food in southern California. It was just as exclusive as the Los Angeles Club and membership was rigidly closed to Christians, though many, including Joseph P. Kennedy, tried to join. Its initiation fee of twenty-two thousand dollars was the highest in the country, and when oil was discovered on Hillcrest property, it became America's richest country club, with each member becoming a stockholder in the private oil company.

Hillcrest gave the Jews of Hollywood something very American to be proud of; it confirmed their conformity to the American mode. At the same time, it became one of the few centers of Jewish identity in Hollywood, more important to the Jews of the movie industry than any synagogue or charity or political cause, or even the romantic legends of their own movies. It was the closest thing they had to a Hollywood Jewish community center. A great deal of business was conducted at Hillcrest, along with the golf and tennis and high-stakes games of poker, bridge, and gin rummy. Jokes and insults were swapped in Yiddish, a language never used in the office or on the set. Here, in fact, was one place in Hollywood where it was permissible to celebrate Judaism, and where Judaism was not treated as a guilty secret.

Outside the club, and to the world at large, the facade the movie men projected was that of non-Jews. Once, at MGM, a disgruntled director muttered that Louis B. Mayer was a "Jewish son of a bitch." He was sternly reminded by an associate that "in this business, there's no such thing as a Jew, so there's no such thing as a Jewish son of a bitch." Hollywood's films were laundered of Jewish themes, as well as of themes having to do with any form of racial or religious prejudice. The whole idea of "message movies" was anathema, on the theory that audiences went to films to get away from their troubles and not to be lectured on what was wrong with the world. "If you want to send a message, go to Western Union," Sam

Goldwyn had said. But of course Goldwyn often broke his own rules, and the closest thing to a Jewish movie prior to World War II was his *Earth and High Heaven*, based on a novel by Gwendolyn Graham. Even so, the film's underlying theme of religious intolerance was so muted as to be nearly imperceptible.

Just as Samuel Bronfman preferred to hide his company's ethnic identity under the mantle of the Seagram name, and David Sarnoff preferred the grandly chauvinistic name of Radio Corporation of America even after he himself had moved to the head of it, so the motion picture companies gave themselves names that were either patriotic (Columbia, Republic) or ethnically innocent but portentous (Twentieth Century, Paramount, Universal, United Artists, RKO). Only Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer contained a recognizably Jewish name (who remembered Sam Goldfish, much less Gelbfisz?). And only Warner Brothers announced its founders' names in its corporate title. Though the four brothers were Polish Jews, the name Warner sounded properly American.

But none of this is to say that Hollywood's Jews in the early 1940s were too preoccupied with matters of style and status and American assimilation to be philanthropic. In Los Angeles, the movie men contributed millions to create the magnificent Wilshire Boulevard Temple, the second-largest Jewish house of worship in the world. They gave generously to Mount Sinai and Cedars of Lebanon hospitals. They sent large checks to United Jewish Appeal and, less enthusiastically, to B'nai B'rith, which they thought of as "too militant." They also gave to non-Jewish causes like the Boy Scouts of America.

Russian-born Louis B. Mayer had his own idiosyncratic ways of giving. For one thing, he said that he preferred to give to Catholic charities rather than to Jewish ones, explaining that the Jewish philanthropies always published the size of his gifts, whereas the Catholic ones did not. (This is not true; one can give as quietly and anonymously to a Jewish cause as to any other.) Was Mayer flirting with conversion to Catholicism? Some people thought so. One of his good friends and frequent traveling companions was Francis Cardinal Spellman. But a more practical explanation was that the Catholic Legion of Decency had been coming down harder than ever on the issue of "morality" in Hollywood films. The word *God* could not be uttered in a movie, nor could the word *breast*; a

pregnant woman could not be shown, and even when a man and woman were married in a film story, they could not be shown on the same bed, even if they were merely sitting side by side, fully clothed. To Mayer, it was simply good business to have friends among the princes of the church. Mayer had also been criticized for publicly wining and dining the openly anti-Semitic Henry Ford, Sr., and for posing for a photo with him on a bicycle built for two. On the other hand, Mayer wanted to film *Young Edison*, and the Edison Museum, which he wanted for a set, was on Mr. Ford's property.

Mayer liked to boast that he was a one-hundred-percent patriotic American, and claimed that he had been born on the Fourth of July. (True or not, no one knew.) And he could produce a rationale to demonstrate that he was one of the principal benefactors of the American public at large. By the early 1940s, Mayer's salary was the largest of any individual in the United States. And a high official of the Internal Revenue Service, so he claimed, had congratulated him on his generosity to himself. After all, this unnamed IRS man had said, if he paid himself a lower salary he would pay less in taxes. And those big taxes of his, Mayer said proudly, were caring for widows and orphans all over America, and were helping American soldiers fight the war against the Nazis.

Sam Goldwyn's philanthropies were sporadic, and of course he never forgave a personal slight. He presented a gruff, hardhearted exterior, and was never able to forgive his first wife for divorcing him. When their only daughter, Ruth, long estranged, wrote to him many years after the divorce—as a married housewife living in New Jersey—saying, “You will probably think it strange to hear from me,” she went on to tell him that she was going to have a baby, his first grandchild. In the margin of Ruth's letter, Goldwyn scribbled angrily, “Ignore this letter!” At the same time, however, he continued to send regular checks to relatives in Europe. An uncle in Warsaw got a hundred dollars a month, and a distant unmarried cousin named Lily Linder got the same monthly stipend. Even more distant relatives got annual gifts for Hanukkah. To be sure, he often scolded these people in the letters that accompanied their checks. One sister, Nettie, was a particular problem. Nettie suffered from “nerves,” and from a husband who couldn't seem to hold a job. “Please stop crying!” he wrote to Nettie. “I didn't marry your husband—you did!” Still, over the years, he had raised

Nettie's allowance from fifty dollars a month to sixty-five, and eventually to one hundred. After Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939, Nettie's letters became less frequent. Then they stopped altogether. What became of her can only be imagined. Sam Goldwyn refused to speak of her.

Of course, not all wealthy American Jews turned a deaf ear to the cries for help from Jews across the Atlantic. In 1939, for example, on a visit to Cuba to oversee his extensive gambling operations there, Meyer Lansky learned that a boatload of Jewish refugees had entered Havana harbor. The Cuban government had refused to let them ashore, had ordered them deported, and a number had been so desperate that they had jumped overboard and swum to shore. Lansky, who had no shortage of influence with the Cuban government (his casinos and hotels were among the island's principal employers, and the Cuban president collected a share of the casinos' take), simply went to the immigration inspector and demanded a change of policy. He also promised to pay five hundred dollars for each refugee admitted, and offered his guarantee that if any refugee became a burden on the Cuban state he himself would be responsible.

And in Montreal, increasingly wearied by continued rebuffs from the Canadian establishment, Sam Bronfman had begun shifting more and more of his philanthropic energies to Jewish causes. If the Christians did not want to accept him among their leaders, then he would work for the Jews. He and his brother Allan headed a fund-raising drive to build Montreal's Jewish General Hospital. Their initial goal had been to raise eight hundred thousand dollars. Before they finished, they had raised twice that amount. Mr. Sam had then been elected to head the Canadian Jewish Congress, a post he would hold for twenty-three years. And, in 1940, in response to what was happening in Europe, Mr. Sam created the congress's Refugee Committee. One of his committee's accomplishments was persuading the Canadian government to pass an act permitting twelve hundred Jewish "orphans" to enter Canada from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. Then, with a certain amount of élan, Mr. Sam and his committee demanded—and got—permission from Ottawa to accept the Jewish orphans' parents and grandparents as well. All told, Mr. Sam's efforts saved some seven thousand lives.

Still, sad to say, impressive as these individual accomplishments were, they were not enough; although the Jews saved numbered in the thousands,

those who perished numbered in the millions. And as the war with Germany progressed, and as the ultimate ends of Hitler's anti-Semitism became ever more nightmarishly clear, a disturbing phenomenon was taking place in the United States. The process of de-Semitism that had been noticeable primarily in the film industry in the 1920s and 1930s, where it had been treated as something of a joking matter, now appeared to be spreading inexorably into every area of American life. It was as though Jews were going underground, or were being forgotten or overlooked, or were being written off by—and out of—history, and it was no longer funny. In the Catskill resorts, Jewish comics were dropping their Jewish peddler and Jewish tailor routines. Sophie Tucker no longer closed her act with "My Yiddishe Mama," but with Irving Berlin's stirringly patriotic "God Bless America."

Back in 1939, Danny Kaye had met his wife-to-be, the composer-lyricist Sylvia Fine, at an "adult summer camp" on the Borscht Circuit called Tamiment. Together, they wrote and performed a number of Jewish-parody songs like "Stanislavsky" and "Pavlova" at Tamiment, and that year Kaye got his first Broadway role in *The Straw Hat Revue*, with Imogene Coca. In 1940, he opened at a New York nightclub called La Martinique, and became an overnight sensation using much of the Tamiment material. But by 1942, when Sam Goldwyn hired him for his first film role in *Up in Arms*, the mood had already begun to change, and *Up in Arms* was not going to contain any Jewish-parody material, nor was Kaye to play a Jewish character.

Goldwyn, furthermore, who had made a special trip to New York for just one night simply to catch Danny Kaye's act at La Martinique, had been so entranced with the comic's performance that he had signed him to a starring contract without the usual precaution of having him screen-tested.

It was not until several months later, when the script for *Up in Arms* was finished and a number of sequences around Kaye had already been committed to celluloid, that Danny Kaye actually arrived in Hollywood to do his scenes—and to be screen-tested. When Goldwyn looked at the first test, he was horrified. "Danny's face was all angles," Frances Goldwyn recalled, "and his nose was so long and thin it looked like Pinocchio's."

"He looks too—too—" Goldwyn muttered, unable to bring himself to say "Jewish."

“Well,” his wife reminded him, “he *is* Jewish.”

“But let’s face it,” Goldwyn said, “Jews are funny looking.”

Goldwyn then summoned Kaye to his office. “Do something about your nose,” Goldwyn ordered. But Kaye declined. If Goldwyn wanted him, he would have to take him nose and all.

More tests were made, and still more. In each of them, new lighting was tried, and new makeup. But none of the takes seemed to draw the focus of Kaye’s face away from the nose, and Goldwyn continued to be dissatisfied with his star’s appearance. Meanwhile, the rest of the *Up in Arms* company stood idle, waiting for its star, and a number of the people at his studio whom Goldwyn most trusted and respected began—at first hesitantly, then with increasing insistence—urging Goldwyn to accept the loss in pride and money and call the picture off, to forget about doing anything with Danny Kaye, to buy out his contract, and cast someone else in the part. Danny Kaye would never “look right” for movies. He might be fine for Broadway and nightclub acts, but he would never be a film star.

Goldwyn could accept, albeit with difficulty, the loss of money. But swallowing his pride was impossible. He had “discovered” Danny Kaye. He had brought him to Hollywood. To lose face in the eyes of his peers, to admit a mistake, was not in Sam Goldwyn’s nature. “In dealing with my husband,” Frances Goldwyn would recall later, “there was one thing you had to remember. *You* could be right. But he *could not be wrong*.” One night late in 1942 Sam and Frances Goldwyn sat up until dawn; Goldwyn paced the floor of the Laurel Canyon house, arguing with himself, and with his wife, about ways in which it might be possible to make Danny Kaye photograph-able. In the morning, having had no sleep, the Goldwyns drove down to the studio to run through, in the projection room, the long series of Danny Kaye screen tests one more time. After perhaps the third test, Goldwyn suddenly yelped, jumped to his feet, and cried, “I’ve got it! I’ve got it!” He seized the studio telephone and asked for the hairdressing department. “Expect Danny Kaye in ten minutes,” he shouted. “He’ll be having his hair dyed blond.” It was done. And Danny Kaye’s wavy mane of blond hair—it had been a dark, reddish brown—became his most enduring trademark, the one caricaturists would focus on for years. The blond hair drew the camera’s, and the audience’s, eye away from the telltale nose. It gave him a Nordic look. He looked like a jaunty Dane. He went on to such

fame and popularity that, when he was at his peak, his daughter Dena recalls, and fan letters from abroad, addressed simply “Danny Kaye, U.S.A.,” arrived in the United States, the post office delivered them to his door.

The hard-to-please film critic Pauline Kael has named *Up in Arms*, the musical that almost didn’t get made because of a Jewish nose, as one of the dozen or so best movie musicals ever made. Sam Goldwyn’s brainstorm about the hair has been cited, in Hollywood, as an example of Goldwyn’s production genius.

But in the process Danny Kaye, the Jew, had disappeared.

In an article for *Commentary* called “The Vanishing Jew of Our Popular Culture,” Henry Popkin wrote of this strange trend, observable during the war and immediately afterward. The Jew in popular culture, he noted, had become “the little man who isn’t there,” and he offered a few very trenchant examples. In Irving Shulman’s best-selling novel *The Amboy Dukes*, two characters had been named Goldfarb and Semmel; for the paperback reprint, they became Abbot and Saunders. Similarly, in the reprint of Jerome Weidman’s *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*, the character Meyer Babushkin became transformed into Michael Babbin, and one Mr. Pulvermacher became Mr. Pulsifer. When Ben Hecht’s own play *The Front Page*—co-written with Charles MacArthur—had been first produced on Broadway in 1928, and made into a film in 1931, a comic character had been named Irving Pincus. In a second movie version, called *His Girl Friday*, in 1940, Pincus was renamed Joe Pettibone. In George S. Kaufman’s *Butter and Egg Man*, another comedy character had been named Lehman. He was still named Lehman in the first film version, under its original Broadway title, in 1928, and also in a second movie version in 1934 called *The Tenderfoot*. But by 1937, when the Kaufman story was resurrected in film for the third time as *Dance, Charlie, Dance*, Lehman, which was the name of a prominent Jewish banking family, had become Morgan, the name of a great Christian banker. And in yet a fourth incarnation of the same story in 1940, *An Angel from Texas*, Morgan became Allen. Prior to the war, the popular columnist Walter Winchell had been having periodic fun with a comic Jewish-dialect character he called Mefoofsky. Mefoofsky had disappeared from Winchell’s columns by 1940, and Winchell had begun piously inveighing against the poor taste of dialect

humor. Popkin went on to cite many more examples of ethnic revisionism, or ethnic evasiveness.

America seemed to have reentered an era of Victorian nicety, when mild expressions were substituted for disagreeable truths; an era of euphemism, when to *die* became to *pass away*; when *toilet* became *rest room* or *convenience* or *powder room*; when *poverty stricken* became *underprivileged* or *disadvantaged*; when *crippled* became *handicapped*, a *garbage collector* became a *sanitation engineer*, and a *defeat* became a *strategic withdrawal of troops*. Of course even *anti-Semite* is a euphemism for *anti-Jew*, since a true anti-Semite would be one opposed to all Semitic people, including Arabs. And even the term “Jewish” could be construed as evasive or defensive, since there are no equivalent terms, such as “Christianish” or “Moslemish.” Hitler was himself fond of euphemisms, and instead of *murder* spoke of a *final solution*.

Mr. Popkin did not note that euphemism is a characteristic form of expression in totalitarian countries, where *assassination* becomes *liquidation*, where an *invasion* is a *liberation*, and where a *military takeover* is an *appropriate action*. But he did conclude that the gradual elimination of the Jew from the American public consciousness was not a matter of anti-Semitism, exactly. “This,” he wrote, “originates not in hate, but in a misguided benevolence—or fear ... [and the source of it] is Hitler. When Hitler forced Americans to take anti-Semitism seriously, it was apparently felt that the most eloquent reply that could be made was a dead silence.”

13

AT LAST, A HOMELAND

In 1937, Benny Siegel—whom everybody called Bugsy, though never to his face—had left the East for Hollywood with the idea of becoming a movie star. After all, he was a friend of George Raft, and Benny knew that he was handsome and bore more than a passing resemblance to Errol Flynn. Nothing much had come of the acting ambition, but he had also been given an assignment by his old friend Meyer Lansky, which was to set up the organization's own racing wire to the West Coast, to supervise bookmaking operations there, and to introduce Lansky's numbers game to the Mexican-American population of Los Angeles. At all three of these tasks he had succeeded.

He had also, on his own, made a number of trips to investigate a dusty little desert crossroads called Las Vegas. Gambling had been made legal in Nevada in 1931, and its capital had become Reno, in the north, where gambling operations were pretty much under the control of two or three Christian families. But when the federal government started work on the Hoover Dam in the early 1930s, the nearest town of any size where the construction workers could come to gamble was Las Vegas. And when the dam was finished, Siegel figured, Las Vegas would have something that it desperately needed if it was to sustain any growth at all—a water supply. Siegel began to dream of turning Las Vegas into a huge, luxury resort dedicated to gambling. Las Vegas was only a little over five hours' drive from Los Angeles, and it would attract the high rollers from the movie crowd. These glamorous types, furthermore, would attract tourists. Siegel shared his idea with Lansky, and Lansky liked it. There was little likelihood that he and his group could invade the claims that other casino operators

had already staked out in Reno, but there was no reason why they couldn't have the southern part of the state to themselves.

Lansky carried the idea of Las Vegas one step farther. The resort should offer the most luxurious accommodations, the most elegant restaurants and bars, topflight entertainment in its nightclubs—the proximity to Hollywood made that feasible—all at rock-bottom prices, affordable to almost anyone. The money, after all, would be made at the gaming tables. Plans to develop Las Vegas would probably have got off the drawing boards in the late 1930s if the war and wartime shortages had not intervened.

Meanwhile, Benny Siegel cut quite a swath in Hollywood. He was impeccably tailored, favoring cashmere sport jackets, monogrammed silk shirts from Sulka, snappy ascots, and hand-benched English shoes. He was swept up by the movie crowd, invited to all the best parties, seated at the best tables at Romanoff's and the Brown Derby, and dated the likes of Ava Gardner, Lana Turner, and Betty Grable. Meyer Lansky had also supplied him with a plump little sidekick, assistant, and bodyguard named Mickey Cohen.

Cohen was by no means as dashing and debonair as his boss. Short and round, a chewed-up cigar usually stuck between his teeth, he looked like a character Damon Runyan might have invented, and talked like one, too. But there was something about Mickey Cohen that struck people—women, particularly—as *cute*. He was teddy-bear cuddly, and he was fun to be around. Mickey Cohen, too, had no trouble making friends in the movie capital, and no trouble dating movie stars. He brought out their mothering instincts. Among his celebrated friends he counted Judy Garland, Betty Grable, Alice Faye, and Don Ameche. As a criminal, Mickey Cohen was something of a joke, but he was an affable joke. He had a neurotic obsession about cleanliness and would wash his hands hundreds of times a day. Even in prison—through a miscalculation, Cohen had spent some time in the penitentiary—his daily consumption of Kleenex and toilet paper was monumental.

But, like his superiors, Lansky and Siegel, Cohen insisted that he didn't think of himself as a criminal, but as a man in a service type of business. Crime, as Cohen defined it, was when a father and his ten-year-old son got off a plane at the Los Angeles airport after a holiday in Hawaii, and were held up at gunpoint by a band of young hoodlums. The father and son

turned over their money, their watches, their rings. The gunmen then shot them both, killing the boy and paralyzing the father for life. This had actually happened and that, to Cohen's mind, was crime—pointless murder. To speak of that sort of thing in the same breath with what Mickey Cohen did for a living gave his livelihood a bad name. That sort of criminal, as he put it, was “not good for anyone's image.”

In Hollywood, Mickey Cohen was a good friend to have, in more ways than just helping place a bet at an out-of-town track. If one was hoping for a particular movie role, or was having difficulty negotiating a contract, or was having union problems at one of the studios, Mickey would make a phone call or two and work it out. He was Hollywood's Mr. Fixit. As an example of the kind of power he wielded, a young and ambitious California politician named Richard M. Nixon had sought Cohen's support. But Cohen hadn't liked Nixon, who reminded him, he wrote, of “a three-card Monte dealer ... a rough hustler of some kind.”

Mickey Cohen had what he called his “code of ethics,” as his story of how he became Betty Grable's friend illustrates. Early in his career, on orders from Lansky and Siegel, Cohen had organized a holdup at a Los Angeles nightclub operated by one Eddie Neales, who had not been “cooperating” with his protection payoffs. Cohen had been “at the stick,” meaning he had a shotgun trained on the room while the others carried pistols. The patrons were instructed to put their wallets and jewelry on the tables, where they were collected. One of the jeweled ladies at the club was Miss Grable. Later, when Cohen had been promoted to less menial chores in the organization, he met Miss Grable socially, and, like the gentleman he was, apologized to her for the incident at Eddie Neales's place. Miss Grable giggled and confessed that she and her friends had found the whole thing pretty exciting. Then she whispered in Cohen's ear, “We were insured anyway.”

Mickey Cohen also became a good friend of, and did favors for, Ben Hecht. But of how they became friends, and of what the favors were, each man would tell a different story.

In his 1954 autobiography, *A Child of the Century*, Hecht wrote that Mickey Cohen had first approached him in 1941, not long after the disappointing fund-raising rally at the Fox studio commissary for Peter Bergson's Jewish Brigade. According to Hecht, Cohen also had the notion

that “millions” could be raised from the studio heads for the Bergson cause, though presumably Cohen had somewhat different fund-raising tactics in mind. According to Hecht, when he explained to Cohen that this had already been tried, and had failed miserably, Cohen had said, “Knockin’ their own proposition, huh?”

But in his own 1975 autobiography, Mickey Cohen gave this version of their meeting and its purpose: First of all, said Cohen, Ben Hecht approached him, and not the other way around. And the year was not 1941, but 1947, an important difference considering the fact that a whole world war had begun and ended in the interval. At that point, Cohen said, he had never heard of Hecht, and learning that the writer wanted to see him, had asked, “Who the hell is Ben Hecht?” Finally, Cohen recalled an entirely different reason for the meeting. It had nothing to do with Bergson’s Jewish Brigade—by then a dead issue, anyway—but had been to enlist Cohen’s support for Israel in its bitter war of independence. This would seem to make sense, because by 1947 Hecht had become a militant Zionist.

In the United States at the time, there were almost as many kinds of Zionists as there were Jews. There were religious Zionists, labor Zionists, Zionist moderates, Zionist militants. The splinter groups of Zionism operated with as much internecine conflict as with cooperation. Jewish Socialists tended to see the Zionist movement as competitive with their own—a distraction that would draw the attention and energies of American Jewry away from what the Socialists saw as a more important goal, the improving of living and working conditions of the masses. The Socialists saw the creation of the State of Israel as an essentially bourgeois, capitalist enterprise.

In 1947, Palestine was in a state of siege as the days of the British mandate drew to a close, and it became clear that Britain had no intention of implementing the Balfour Declaration of thirty years earlier, which had stated that London and His Majesty’s government would “view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” A civil war was raging between Palestine’s Arabs and Jews, and there were terrorist incidents by both Arab and Jewish guerrillas against the British forces. One of the Jewish guerrilla groups, the Haganah (“Defense”), had been organized by David Ben-Gurion, and contained men who had been trained by the British in commando tactics during the war for missions

behind enemy lines. Now this British training was being used as the British had feared it would be—in raids and forays against British troops, to attack and blow up bridges, railroads, and radar installations. The Haganah had been formed completely illegally; nonetheless, it considered itself the “legitimate” Jewish army.

Less legitimate guerrilla contingents were the so-called Stern Gang, and Menachem Begin’s violent Irgun Tzevai Leumi. Between 1943 and 1947, Begin’s Irgun had waged relentless war against the British rule, and Begin had begun to be seen—and perhaps to see himself—as a kind of personification of Jewish bravery, stamina, and military ruthlessness, a Jewish Attila or Genghis Khan. Ben Hecht, wrote Mickey Cohen, had come to see him to ask his help in raising funds for Begin and the Irgun terrorists.

At the time, Cohen admitted, he had not been paying too much attention to international affairs or to what was going on in Palestine. But Cohen considered himself a good Jew, and when he met with Hecht—and when Hecht explained to him in dramatic terms the Irgun’s aims and considerable successes—Cohen quickly became excited and volunteered his services to the Irgun’s cause. The violent nature of the Irgun’s activities obviously appealed to the gangster in Cohen. As he wrote, “This guy got me so goddamn excited. He started telling me how these guys actually fight like racket guys would. They didn’t ask for a quarter and they gave no quarter. And I got pretty well enthused with them.”

Cohen could also understand why some of Hollywood’s higher-ups showed less enthusiasm over the possibility of an independent Israel. “Jewish people,” he wrote, “are very complacent, particularly when they become high in their society walk of life, high in their field of endeavor.” It was true. The more the Russians moved upward socially and economically, the more they seemed to think and behave like the Old Guard, anti-Zionist Germans. (Though even the Germans had a Zionist concept of sorts. While they dismissed the idea of a Jewish state as an unrealistic fantasy, and though a resolution had been passed by American Reform rabbis declaring themselves “unalterably” opposed to such an idea, they had characteristically added, “America is our Zion.”)

By the 1940s, more and more prosperous Russians were abandoning the Orthodoxy, and joining the Germans’ “more American” Reform temples. Orthodoxy had become synonymous with poverty, with lack of progress—

the party line that the Germans had adopted more than a generation earlier. The writer Doris Lilly has put this phenomenon another way: “When one has ten million dollars, one is no longer Jewish.” This de-Semitization process, noticeable in the acquisition of wealth and status, has also been described as the Law of Diminishing Concerns.

But Cohen still saw himself as a member of the fighting Jewish underclass, and promised Hecht that he himself would toss a fund-raising affair for the Irgun. This was held at Slapsie Maxie’s restaurant in Hollywood, of which Cohen happened to own a share. As a matter of course, the major studio heads like Goldwyn and Mayer were invited but, as Cohen had guessed they would, they declined, though Cohen’s lawyer did come to him with a message to the effect that Goldwyn and the others might be more receptive if Cohen would switch his allegiance to the more moderate, less terrorist Haganah. But Cohen would have none of that. As a result, the gathering at Slapsie Maxie’s was not of the elite that had met at the Fox commissary six years earlier. But there was a respectable contingent of film stars, including Betty Grable and Harry James, along with every important gambler in the area, plus a number of prominent judges, for in Mickey Cohen’s line of work it was important to have friends among the judiciary. (Though gambling was illegal in nearby Burbank, Lansky-run gambling parlors flourished openly, and no wonder—the Burbank sheriff’s office, the police department, and even some state officials in Sacramento shared in the take.) One judge, who was not even Jewish, came all the way from Galveston to deliver his personal check for five thousand dollars. Unlike the Fox affair, at this gathering no pledges were accepted—only cash. And unlike the Fox affair, Cohen’s evening was a resounding success, with more than half a million dollars collected for the Irgun fighters before it was over.

Soon Mickey Cohen was spending so much time and energy on behalf of the Irgun and Israeli independence that he was having to curtail his regular activities. But that was all right with Meyer Lansky, who was also throwing his weight behind the Israeli cause. Lansky’s bailiwick was the East Coast, and in particular the docks of New York and New Jersey, where he wielded more than a little power. With the war in Europe over, shiploads of military hardware—machine guns, grenades, mines, explosives, and other matériel—were arriving in East Coast harbors from the European theater of

operations to be put into mothballs. Some of this equipment had seen action in the war, but much of it was brand-new and had never been used. There were machine guns that had never been assembled, and were still packed in oil and straw. Lansky, with his influence on the docks, had no trouble seeing to it that these shipments got diverted from their intended destinations and sent directly to the Israeli fighters. Helping him were Albert Anastasia, who was in charge of the New York docks, and Charlie “the Jew” Yulnowski, who handled New Jersey.

It was a remarkably streamlined operation. At one point, for example, a large shipment of dynamite was smoothly rerouted from Newark to Haifa. Then word came back from Palestine that the Jewish guerrillas were not using the dynamite properly. Mickey Cohen had a solution. He had a friend known simply as “Chopsie,” whose specialty was blowing up things. Chopsie was immediately dispatched to Palestine, where he spent eleven months giving lessons to the Israeli troops on the fine art of handling explosives.

Meyer Lansky learned through his grapevine of informants that, while scattered Israeli armies were battling Egyptian forces in the Gaza Strip and in the Sinai, certain American armaments dealers were somehow managing to smuggle arms to Egypt. This was illegal, since there was an embargo against shipping arms from anywhere in the United States to the Middle East, supposedly to be fair to all sides in the conflict. But the law wasn’t working. In fact, the Arab states had succeeded in buying more than fourteen million dollars’ worth of surplus American arms. The British were also selling arms to the Arabs, and making a lucrative business of it, and the Arabs were able to buy arms from other European countries as well.

To correct this situation, Lansky, as usual, took the law into his own hands. One munitions firm in Pittsburgh was found to be the chief smuggling culprit, and, with the cheerful help of the New York and New Jersey longshoremen, a number of baffling accidents began to happen to this firm’s Egypt-bound consignments when they reached the East Coast ports. Some shipments fell overboard as they were being loaded. Others mysteriously vanished. Still others got loaded on the wrong ships, and somehow those ships were usually bound for Haifa.

Meanwhile, Mickey Cohen, who loved anything to do with a party, was in charge of American fund-raising, and was tossing more affairs in New

York, Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, and Miami, traveling with Ben Hecht as his principal speaker.*

But sometimes Cohen had to turn his attention to less festive matters. When, in one incident, three young Irgun guerrillas were killed by British soldiers and strung up in a public square in Palestine, Cohen decreed immediate vengeance. Contacting his Irgun friends, Cohen ordered that the same number of British officers be killed and hung in the same square. It was done.

Just how aware, in 1947, American Jews were of the role of organized crime in the fight for an independent Israel is unclear. Probably most were not aware. Those who were, numbed by reports of the Holocaust that were at last appearing in the American media, preferred to look the other way, or to take the attitude that the end justified the means. But Meyer Lansky and Mickey Cohen would always insist that all their activities of this period had the tacit blessing of President Harry S Truman. Truman, both men believed, had to have been aware of what was going on. Of course, he could not publicly condone or endorse it. But he sympathized with the Israeli cause. And, by simply doing nothing, he managed to lend his silent support to both the Israeli fighters and the work of the American men who were already being called the Koshers. "To me, he was the greatest man in the world, Harry Truman," Mickey Cohen wrote in his hard-boiled English, "because of what he done for Israel and because he made it available for us to do."

When, on May 14, 1948, Israel officially became a nation, and Britain withdrew its troops, there was cause for great celebration in that part of the Middle East. After nearly two thousand years of statelessness and dispersion, and a half-century after the first Zionist congress in Basel, Switzerland, the image of the Jews as a "rootless" group of "lost" tribes seemed erased from history forever. The preceding ten years had been the most tragic decade in Jewish history. On the continent of Europe, out of a Jewish population of 8,255,000, an estimated 5,957,000 had been murdered by the Nazis. Now those dark years were ending on a note of triumph. The price had been enormous, but now the score seemed to have been settled. The old arguments between Zionists and anti-Zionists seemed now to be both behind the times and beside the point. So did the endless discussions

as to whether the Jews constituted a race, a religion, a nation, or a loosely defined “people.” They were now a *nationality*, and would carry passports to prove it.

Throughout the new country there were parties, dancing in the streets, the waving of flags and the tooting of automobile horns. One sabra—a Jewish native of Palestine—now living in America recalls the first long evening of revelry, which, for her and her young friends, ended up on a beach outside Tel Aviv while the sun came up over the Caesarean hills and lighted up the Mediterranean on what would be the first full day of the State of Israel. “We had been talking about our new country as though it was going to be a new paradise on earth,” she said later, “a kind of magical Land of Oz, a new Eden, where there would be peace and freedom and happiness for Jews forever. But then we began to pinch ourselves, and to remind each other that we had to face reality. We had to remember that now that we had a country of our own, it would be a country like any other, with all the problems any country faces. There would be Israeli heroes, yes, but there would also be Israeli burglars, Israeli rapists, Israeli muggers, Israeli pimps and Israeli prostitutes, Israeli policemen to chase Israeli purse snatchers, and Israeli soldiers to fight, kill, and be killed in—probably more Israeli wars....”

Meanwhile, from the new State of Israel, its first premier, David Ben-Gurion, was throwing open his nation’s arms to Jews of all nationalities, urging, beseeching them to “return home” to Israel. To make the return easier, no bureaucratic paperwork was required. All who considered themselves Jews were welcome. But to most American Jews the idea of going “home” to Israel had little appeal. Home was not there, but here, and it was difficult to envision Israel except in a very abstract way.

There was also some confusion—a complicated panorama of mixed emotions. For the Jewish socialist movement, for example, the fact of Israel took much of the wind out of its sails. What was the point, now, in complaining about the unfairness of the American capitalist system? If the Jewish socialists were unhappy with the state of affairs in America, they now had their own country to go home to, where they could ply their political wares.

For the affluent, the emigration from Eastern Europe to the United States had turned out to be the most golden of all diasporas—and the luckiest. The journey from the tumbledown *shtetls* and ghettos of Russia and Poland to

two-car garages and Saks Fifth Avenue charge accounts had been almost miraculously brief. Whose babushka-wearing grandmother, or even whose unlettered mother, would believe the sight of her offspring driving Cadillacs and walking poodles in Central Park? Dogs as *pets*? The idea would have been unthinkable just one generation earlier, when the dog had been the ferocious sidekick of the *pogromchik*. And yet it had happened. Somehow, the Eastern Europeans had arrived in America at the precise moment when their particular talents and energies—in the garment industry, the film industry, broadcasting, publishing, the liquor business—had been most needed. Success, for even the halfway enterprising, had been downright inevitable, and this seemed more wondrous than the creation, in another part of the world, of a state called Israel.

For most American Jews, yes, it was nice to know that Israel was *there*, for those who needed it, and as an alternative to assimilation, a place to retreat to should life in America ever for some reason become intolerable. But most Jews felt that they had assimilated fairly well, and that America had been good to them. What more, exactly, did Israel have to offer them? They had no need for a refuge now, even though that refuge was there, beckoning and demanding their attention and support. Most would be interested in visiting Israel, out of curiosity, as tourists. And, as a concession to old and almost-forgotten loyalties, most would be willing to buy Mr. Ben-Gurion's bonds. But that was about the extent of it; most would not feel so deeply about Israel as to pull up their now firm American roots to go there to live.

Even the most recent American arrivals—those who had narrowly managed to escape from Hitler—felt this way. Anna Apfelbaum Potok, for example, had arrived in the United States in 1940, barely eight years before the creation of the State of Israel. Born in Warsaw in 1897, she was in the third generation of prominent Polish furriers. As a little girl, she had often visited her grandfather's shop, where he had let her play with the silky skins, and where she had learned to love the touch, of sables particularly, and even the pungent, gamy smell of raw and untreated pelts. There was no question but that Anna and her older brother Maximilian would both join the family's fur business, and after their father's death in 1921, they took it over. The Apfelbaum family had survived the czarist pogroms with no inconvenience whatsoever, because the Apfelbaums supplied fur coats to

the Polish nobility and all the high officials of the country. The mayor of Warsaw and the president of Poland were their customers. After the Russian revolution, they felt no pressure because leaders of the Communist hierarchy traveled from as far away as Moscow and Leningrad to be fitted with coats of Apfelbaum sable, lynx, and karakul. Even after the partition of Poland in 1939, and Warsaw's surrender to the Germans, the Apfelbaums continued to feel secure, and though acknowledged as Jews, were permitted to travel freely about Europe—to the fur market in Leipzig, for example—as non-Jews.

By 1940, however, with the fall of France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway, and Rumania to the Germans, and with Hitler's Final Solution grimly under way, things were very different. It was essential that the Apfelbaums get out of Europe or perish. There was a hasty family conference, and they discussed escape routes. But for several weeks no rail tickets were available out of Warsaw. Then two tickets were obtained to Switzerland, and the plan was for Anna and brother Max to use these, go to Zurich, get funds from Swiss banks, and send for the rest of the family, which included Anna's husband, Leon Potok, their son, her brother's wife and their daughter.

From Zurich, Anna and her brother went to Paris, where they planned to send for the others, only to find that Paris had just been occupied by the Germans. Then, in a terrifying decision, Anna and Max decided to return to Warsaw and personally collect the rest of the family. Somehow—aided by the fact that they both spoke perfect German—they managed this, and the clan regrouped in Warsaw. In the end, five people—Anna, her husband, her brother, and the two children—set off in a small car with a single suitcase, headed they knew not where. Max's wife had agreed to stay behind. There was no room for her in the car, and it was important that the party look like ordinary travelers and not like refugees; she would be sent for later. Max never saw his wife again.

At first, the little car headed south, toward Rumania and the possibility of some Black Sea port, such as Odessa, where passage to some neutral country, such as Spain, might be found. They were stopped at the Rumanian border by Nazi soldiers. Then, in a quick decision, they turned north again, to make a dash for Lithuania, where they were able to make it across the frontier. From there, the little group managed to book passage across the

Baltic Sea to Sweden, where, through the intervention of the American consulate in Stockholm, they were able to obtain visas to the United States, by way of Montreal. The consulate stayed open all night to handle the paperwork.

Anna Potok and her brother Max had often talked of introducing haute couture into their fur business, and Max Apfelbaum, who had read about glamorous American movie stars and their luxurious tastes, thought it might be a good idea to try that approach in New York. He was tired of designing cold-weather furs for Polish and Russian bureaucrats and their plump little wives, and so Anna, who had studied art in Poland, went to her sketch pad. Their first salon, on West Fifty-seventh Street, was small, but their first showing of luxury furs was a huge success. Their original clientele didn't consist of movie stars, exactly, but it did include the likes of Mrs. William S. Paley, Thelma Chrysler Foy, Marjorie Merriweather Post, Mrs. Loel Guinness, and the Duchess of Windsor, who became regular customers for furs with the "Maximilian" label. The choice of the label was an accidental stroke of genius, carrying as it did connotations of grand, expensive, European imperial splendor. One wonders if the brother-sister team of fur designers would have had the same success with "Furs by Apfelbaum."

Had "Madame" Anna Apfelbaum Potok, as the dowager octogenarian head of Maximilian Furs is now called, ever—after that frantic, frightening, zigzag journey across the face of Europe—ever considered emigrating to Israel, where the Jews had at last found a homeland? "Oh, never," she replies. "We loved it here, we were happy here, we were lucky here, and we were successful here, from almost the first moment we arrived." With a twinkle, she adds, "This was where we found our ladies," and she points to the autographed photographs of the American First Ladies she has outfitted with furs, including Jacqueline Kennedy—whose inaugural wraps she designed—Lady Bird Johnson, and Nancy Reagan.

And so, for the majority of American Jews who saw themselves as part of a whole American success story, the new State of Israel had mostly a symbolic meaning. It was not *their* homeland. It did, on the other hand, provide a useful refuge for the persecuted, the misfit, the zealot, the radical, or the malcontent, a place for less fortunate Jews or, rather, those who had been more fortunate than the truly unfortunate who had lost their lives to Hitler—a place for the survivors of the Holocaust. And for Americans who

had lost relatives and friends in the Holocaust, there was a certain amount of bitterness, too, and the feeling that Israel had been offered as a homeland too late.

*For Hecht's activities on behalf of the Irgun, his books would be banned in Great Britain for a number of years.

TOUCHES OF CLASS

“If there was one good thing that came out of the war, it was the fact that it united the American Jewish community. The old social dividing line between the German Jews and the Russian Jews simply melted away.”

This platitude, phrased in various ways, became something of a commonplace in the years immediately following World War II, but was, alas, merely a platitude. The social line between the Germans and the Russians remained as firmly drawn as ever. When it became apparent that the Christian community, in terms of social clubs, did not wish to mingle with Jews as a class, the Jews had simply created social clubs on their own. But now, in nearly every American city of any size, there were at least two Jewish country clubs—the “good” one (German), and the less good (Russian). In New York, the best Jewish country club was the Germans’ Century Country Club in suburban White Plains. The second-best was the Russians’ Sunningdale Golf Club in Scarsdale. There was even a third-best, also Russian—the Old Oaks Country Club. In the city, the elite Jewish men’s club was the Harmonie (German).

Even Jewish houses of worship remained divided along the same lines. New York’s splendid Temple Emanu-El on Fifth Avenue, one of the largest Jewish houses of worship in the world and certainly the costliest, had been founded early in another century by German Jews whose fortunes had come out of the Civil War. Of course, Temple Emanu-El could not bar any Jew—or non-Jew, for that matter—from attending services there. But, with its board of trustees consisting of members of the German-Jewish Old Guard families, it could create the distinct impression of not welcoming Russian-Jewish congregants. For one thing, all the best pews belonged to German

families. The dividing line went even deeper. At such German-Jewish-founded hospitals as New York's Mount Sinai, Russian-Jewish doctors were not welcome on the staff. It was a situation that was galling to all but the most insensitive. If Jewish Americans as a whole were treated, socially, as second-class, then the Russians were third-class citizens.

All this simply added to the Russians' ambivalence about their Jewishness. If, the feeling seemed to be, they were not—even with all their money—considered good enough to rub shoulders with the *goy* elite, perhaps there was a reason. After all, they had not been considered good enough in the old country, either.

Perhaps, to be sure, it had something to do with the lines of work the Russians had gone into. The garment industry was, after all, even when it was creating hundred-thousand-dollar sable coats by Maximilian, still known as the *shmattes* business, or “rag trade”; Maximilian was just a glorified tailor. The entertainment industry was, after all, just “show biz,” and even such a “great lady of the screen” as Joan Crawford had started her career as a prostitute and making pornographic films. The liquor business remained seriously tainted by Prohibition, and so on. No Jew could say, “I am the president of the Manufacturers Trust Company,” or “I am chairman of the Aetna Life Insurance Company,” or “I am a senior partner at Sullivan and Cromwell.” Instead, a Jew was forced to identify himself to the outside world with a little shrug and a little grin that was almost an apology. Even Frances Goldwyn, when explaining what her husband did for a living, would say, “Oh, he's just a little old movie producer.”

To fight these feelings of social and professional inferiority, the new Russian-Jewish millionaires used various tactics. Helena Rubinstein, on her way by 1947 to becoming one of the richest women in the world, was always “Madame” Rubinstein in the office. But, outside it, going to meet people she didn't know, she would always remind her escort, “Don't forget—introduce me by my *good* name,” which was Princess Archil Gourielli. In the Samuel Bronfman household, there were several taboos. The word *booze* could not be used, nor could the expressions “bootlegger” or “rum-runner.” Banished from the family vocabulary, too, was the word *Prohibition*. And Bronfman's children, who were too young to remember it—the oldest was born in 1925—were brought up as though Prohibition had never existed, and though they eventually learned that it had, were never

told that it had had any effect on the family's fortunes. (This rewriting of family history for the children evidently worked. In 1969, at the age of forty, Sam's son Edgar would write in the *Columbia Journal of World Business* that until Repeal, the family had done no business outside of Canada, and write this with such sincerity that it would be apparent he believed it.) Similarly, the Bronfman children grew up believing that Joseph E. Seagram was some distant Canadian ancestor, and since it had been explained to them in a vague sort of way that they were Jewish, the children assumed that Joseph E. Seagram was also Jewish.

Still, in very private moments, and with very old and trusted friends, Mr. Sam's eyes would get a faraway look, his brow would furrow, and he would say, "How long do you think it'll be before they stop calling me a goddamn bootlegger?"

In Hollywood, the movie moguls were particularly sensitive to gossip that portrayed them as illiterates or boors. And yet, when they tried to be genteel and refined, the results were often somewhat less than subtle. One of Louis B. Mayer's favorite words, for example, was *class*. He recognized it in others, and longed to acquire it himself. One of the pet actresses in his stable was Greer Garson, who, with her gently demure good looks and polished English accent, seemed to him the personification of class. But when Mayer, the former junk dealer who had been born in a village outside Minsk, tried to be classy himself it just came out awkward and inept. Someone had told him that golf was a classy American sport, and so he immediately took up golf. But he never quite understood that golf is scored in strokes, and seemed to see it, instead, as a kind of footrace across the golf course. To increase his speed from the first hole to the last, he played with two caddies. When he hit a ball, one caddy was posted down the fairway in order to locate the ball immediately. Meanwhile, the second caddy ran ahead to station himself for the next shot, with Mayer running behind. At the end of the game, Mayer would check his watch and exclaim, "We made it in one hour and seven minutes! Three minutes better than yesterday!"

He had noticed that most upper-crust Americans voted Republican, and so Mayer became an enthusiastic supporter of Republican causes, both in California and nationally. Convinced that after Roosevelt's long presidency, Americans would put a Republican in the White House, Mayer contributed large sums to promote the candidacy of Thomas E. Dewey. Like Sam

Bronfman, who secretly dreamed of being knighted, Mayer had a secret ambition—to be posted as American ambassador to some important foreign country. He would then be entitled to the designation “Honorable.” There is evidence that Dewey had discussed such an appointment with him but, alas, Dewey never made it to the White House.

Mayer had also heard that the breeding of thoroughbred racehorses was an occupation of true aristocrats—the Sport of Kings. And the show-biz aspect of the racing world also appealed to him. He had known nothing at all about horses until a writer-producer friend named Leon Gordon invited him to a race in which Gordon happened to have a horse running. Gordon’s horse won, and down went Gordon into the winner’s circle to great applause and cheers, to be awarded encomiums and presented with wreaths of flowers. That, Mr. Mayer decided, was where he himself would like to be—at the center of the stage and the cynosure of all eyes.

He immediately sent out for all the books that could be found on the care, feeding, and breeding of racehorses. There turned out to be quite a number. Of course, he had no time to read all these lengthy volumes, so he ordered his story department to reduce each book to a one- or two-page synopsis, just as he did with novels that he was thinking of buying for the screen. With no more information than this, Mayer proceeded to buy a thoroughbred named Busher. Busher had the distinction of becoming the first western horse to be entered in the Kentucky Derby. Unfortunately, Busher did not win. Mayer then decided to concentrate on breeding, and purchased Beau Père, a famous Australian stud.

Breeding racehorses, he liked to say, was a gamble very similar to that of show business. You could breed a prize stallion to a prize mare, but you still had no guarantee that the result would be a winner. It could just as easily turn out to be a dud. It was like putting William Powell in a picture with Myrna Loy, pairing Tracy with Hepburn, or Ginger Rogers with Fred Astaire. If the chemistry of the combination was right, you had a hit—and from then on a string of hits, with luck. It was no wonder Mayer referred to his MGM contract players as his “stable.”

Sam Goldwyn was also touchy on the subject of his own lack of formal elegance and formal education. When each new Goldwynism made the rounds, instead of laughing it off, he vociferously denied he had said any such thing, which only added fuel to the story and made more people

chuckle over it. He was, at best, an indifferent speller, but his secretarial staff had learned that it was unwise ever to correct the boss, and so, in his handwritten memos that went out, “research” became “research,” “immediately” became “immediantly,” and so on. He often had difficulty reading the scripts that his writers placed on his desk, and once, in a screenplay about pharaohs in ancient Egypt, Goldwyn protested that a slave would not respond to his master with “Yessiree!” Politely, the writer explained that the line of dialogue read, “Yes, sire.” He just as often mispronounced the names of his actors, but did not like to be corrected on that score, either. He always called Loretta Young “Lorella,” and Joel MacRae was “Joe MacRail.” Once, in a meeting, MacRae said quietly, “It’s Joel MacRae, Mr. Goldwyn.” Goldwyn cried, “Look! He’s telling me how to pronounce his name, and I’ve got him under contract!”

He was always convinced that his rival L. B. Mayer was up to dirty tricks. When, in the 1940s, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer began using the slogan “More Stars Than There Are in Heaven,” it was too much. “Frances!” Goldwyn bellowed at his wife, “Find out how many stars there are in heaven. L.B. says he’s got more.” When Frances replied that the answer was probably billions, if not trillions, Goldwyn telephoned his lawyer to see if MGM could be sued for using false and misleading advertising. When his lawyer informed him that MGM was just using “hyperbole,” and that nothing much could be done to stop it, Goldwyn shot back, “That’s all Mayer is—a goddamned hyper bully!” He fumed over this for weeks.

In Hollywood, Louella Parsons was the closest thing to a society columnist, and though her own command of the King’s English was limited, she wielded great power through her nationally syndicated column.* Sam Goldwyn feuded with Miss Parsons on and off for years, alternately flinging abuse at her and showering her with praise. When she wrote disparaging things about him, his movies, or his stars, he would dash off an angry letter to her. And yet, when she once was taken to a hospital for minor surgery, he filled her room with flowers. And when she appeared on a Goldwyn set to view the filming of an important sequence, Goldwyn hovered over her, murmuring, “How long have you and I known each other, Louella?... How long have you and I been friends?”

When Sam Goldwyn’s film *The Best Years of Our Lives* was released in 1946, it won more Academy Awards than any previous film in motion

picture history. As for the fifty-four- (or fifty-seven-) year-old producer, this was treated as the crowning achievement of his career, and it was certainly a source of great pride for him. The film bestowed upon him, personally, large helpings of class. Also, though L. B. Mayer might claim more stars than there were in heaven, Goldwyn's picture had collected more Oscars than any other, ever. Though Goldwyn would always claim that his personal favorite of all his films was *Wuthering Heights*—a classy English classic written by an English gentlewoman—there was no doubt that all the critical and audience praise for *The Best Years* bolstered his ego enormously.

Coming as it did at the war's end, and telling the story of the homecoming of a soldier mutilated by the war, *The Best Years* found itself described, by certain critics, as an antiwar film—a picture with that element Sam Goldwyn claimed to disdain the most, a *message*. Goldwyn didn't see it that way at all. To him, it was a tribute to the selflessness and bravery of America's fighting men, and a testament to the values that made America great: the fabric of the American family, its tragedies and its triumphs, particularly in small communities across the country—its strengths, its resilience, and most of all, its durability—“a kind of love song to this country of ours,” he once said, “in war or out of it, it doesn't matter. The war theme is strictly coincidental.” (He probably meant “incidental.”)

While basking euphorically in the critical praise for—and the box-office receipts of—*The Best Years*, Goldwyn received a letter with a postmark he had not thought about in years: Gloversville, New York. The letter was from Gloversville's mayor. The mayor had heard that the great motion picture producer of the great new patriotic film classic was going to be on the East Coast. Would Mr. Goldwyn possibly be able to come up to Gloversville to attend a banquet that the town wanted to give in his honor? Gloversville wanted to name Sam Goldwyn its favorite son.

Its favorite son! It was astonishing. Sam Goldwyn had certainly not forgotten Gloversville, but it seemed inconceivable that Gloversville remembered him. And now none other than the mayor of the little upstate city had remembered him, and wished to make the poor immigrant youth from Poland an honorary native. He was overwhelmed.

Sam and Frances Goldwyn had by then dined at the Roosevelt White House a number of times. In their own house at 1200 Laurel Lane they had entertained for the likes of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and Queen

Marie of Rumania. One would have assumed that Goldwyn could have taken an invitation to visit Gloversville (pop. 19,677) in his stride. Not at all. He reacted to the mayor's letter as though he had been placed on the king of England's Birthday Honours List. It was almost too much for him. He struggled over the wording of his response to the mayor's invitation for several days before he was satisfied that he had it right, then humbly wrote to the mayor, accepting the high honor.

The next few weeks were spent in furious preparation for the trip, and the event. For days beforehand, he fretted over what Frances ought to wear—should it be a dress or a suit? Rummaging through her closets, he finally settled on a dark blue suit. When that was decided—which coat? Since it was fall, and it could be chilly in the Adirondack foothills, Frances suggested her mink. “Too showy,” said Sam, though the mink had not been new for some time. Frances then proposed a somewhat older nutria. In the end, her husband decreed that it be the mink after all—but without any jewelry. Though that meant merely removing her wristwatch, she did as she was told. Then Sam could not decide which suit, shirt, and necktie he himself should wear.

The Goldwyns had arranged to travel from New York City to Saratoga Springs by Pullman, and from there to Gloversville in a hired chauffeur-driven car. On the train, Sam was tense and fidgety, and said hardly a word. When Frances suggested a snack in the dining car, he could not eat. By the time they reached Saratoga, he was so pale that Frances worried that he might be ill.

In the car, he tied and retied his necktie a number of times, and fussed with the points of his handkerchief in his breast pocket. Several times he had to ask the driver to pull off to the side of the road so that he could empty his nervous bladder. As the Goldwyn limousine approached the outskirts of the little factory town, Sam Goldwyn suddenly began to scream, “Turn back! Turn back! I can't go on!” Gently, his wife reminded him that it was too late to turn back now. The whole town would be waiting for him.

For years, Sam Goldwyn had regaled his wife with tales of Gloversville—of his boss, Mr. Aronson, of the rooming house where he had lived, and particularly of the splendors of Gloversville's proudest hotel, the Kingsborough. Sam had never stayed at the Kingsborough, nor had he ever eaten a meal there—that would have cost a whole dollar—but he had got to

know its magnificent lobby intimately, and had described it to Frances in lavish detail: The floors were of marble, the walls of carved mahogany. There were potted palms, polished brass spittoons, enormous leather armchairs and sofas, and tall plate-glass windows through which, standing outside on a Saturday night, the young Sam Goldwyn had watched the elite of Gloversville disporting themselves in their evening finery. The dinner in Sam's honor would of course be held at the Kingsborough.

Though, when they arrived, Frances Goldwyn did not find the Kingsborough Hotel to be quite the palatial establishment of her husband's memory, it was very crowded. There were little ceremonies. Frances Goldwyn was presented with a box containing a pair of Gloversville gloves, which she quickly put on. Sam's old boss, Mr. Aronson, was there, and Sam was presented to a Mr. Libglid, who asked if Sam remembered him. At first, Sam could not recall Mr. Libglid, but then they fell into each other's arms. Mr. Libglid had been the benefactor in Hamburg who had taken up a collection for Sam in the ghetto in order to pay for his passage to England. Mr. Libglid had emigrated to America, and Gloversville, during the Hitler period. It was all very emotional.

During dinner, Sam reminisced with his old friends and former fellow employees about the old days, how he had started as an errand boy, become a glove cutter, and eventually a salesman in the Hudson Valley territory. There was also some more serious talk about the current state of the glove business—of market and fashion trends, of the quality of skins, cutting, and so on. From the way Sam Goldwyn joined in on the business talk, Frances got the distinct impression that her husband could still manage to do rather well in the glove business, should necessity ever force him to return to it.

Finally it was time for Sam to make his speech. He was introduced by the mayor and started up the aisle, carrying his hat. Halfway up the aisle, he dropped the hat, and had to stoop to pick it up. Then he stood for a moment, uncertain whether to walk back and place the hat on his chair or to continue up to the stage with it. He decided on the latter course, and carried the hat to the speaker's platform, where he placed it, and where it looked somewhat awkward and conspicuous. He then tried to place the hat underneath the lectern, and it fell to the floor again. He left it there. Then he faced the audience, stood there for a moment, and began, "I've always been honest —"

Then he burst into tears.

The war had shot a large hole through the gambling business. Gambling, as Meyer Lansky saw it, was an outgrowth of the tourist industry, and tourism had understandably languished during the war years. The capital of Lansky's gambling empire had been the gaily glittering resort capital of prewar Havana, where the Lansky group had controlling interest in a number of casinos, including the largest at the Hotel Nacional. There were also other casinos—both legal and illegal—in the Caribbean, in the Catskills and the Adirondacks, in New Jersey, in Kentucky, in California, and in gambling boats anchored off the coast of Florida. All these could, and would, be revived from the wartime doldrums. But there was another, more pressing, business problem.

During the war years, while Lansky, Mickey Cohen, and their friends—now beginning to be known as the “syndicate”—had been devoting much energy and money to the cause of Israel's independence, huge reserves of capital had been lying, untouched, in Swiss bank accounts, quietly accruing interest. In Lansky's personal accounts reposed something in the neighborhood of thirty-six million dollars, most of it from Prohibition profits. All this was fine, though Lansky did not consider earning interest a very exciting way to make money. The problem was that the syndicate was cash poor. It had an excess of venture capital, but no new venture to invest it in. On the drawing boards, in the meantime, lay Benny Siegel's idea for Las Vegas.

It seemed a natural. Not only was gambling legal in Nevada, but so was prostitution. Lansky disapproved of that, but he conceded that prostitutes would provide Las Vegas with an added attraction. And he liked Benny Siegel's concept of Las Vegas providing a luxury resort for the “little man.” Las Vegas would not turn away the big-time gambler, but it would appeal primarily to the middle- to lower-income American. To do this, it would not only be inexpensive, but it would at the same time project the kind of classiness that middle- to lower-income Americans associated with the way rich folk lived, which was the way they saw rich folk live in movies—chandeliers, mirrors, swimming pools, hovering servants, sunken bathtubs, gilt, velvet, plush, velour. A new luxury had appeared on the market since

the war. It was called air-conditioning. Las Vegas would have that—and, indeed, it would need it.

To Siegel's original concept, Meyer Lansky added a few new wrinkles of his own. The average American's idea of a gambling casino, he argued, again came from movies—the swank casinos of Evian and Monte Carlo, where men wore white ties and tails and monocles, and women sported tiaras and jeweled cigarette holders. A Las Vegas resort, he suggested, should not be so intimidating. There should be no dress code. Should a gambling patron wish, he or she should be able to enter the casino in swimming trunks or a nightie. In the midst of opulence would flourish a mood of libidinous abandon. Lansky also recommended that nowhere in the proposed resort should there be any clocks, since nothing was so distracting to the gambler as an awareness of the passage of time. To this end, the casino should be located at the heart of the hotel, without windows, where night would fall and dawn would come up with no one noticing the difference. This would also mean that no guest could pass from the reception desk to the elevators, from the swimming pool to the tennis court, from the bar to the dining room, without passing through the casino.

No one knew more about gambling than Meyer Lansky. He had other suggestions. Among them, he proposed that slot machines be placed at the arrivals gates of the Las Vegas airport. These would be adjusted to yield a high payoff, so that the arriving visitor, dropping a dime into the machine, would usually be rewarded with a handful of shiny coins. Flushed with the possibilities of winning big, he would then head immediately for the casino, where, of course, the odds of winning would be much less favorable. All these details were worked out at a meeting of the syndicate in 1945, and Benny Siegel was placed in charge of the Las Vegas project, with a budget of a million dollars.

Siegel and Lansky, meanwhile, had often watched the dancing and precision marching of the trained flamingos in the infield of the Hialeah racetrack. Not only was the flamingo a beautiful and exotic bird, but, it was said, the Seminole Indians believed the flamingo was a symbol of good luck, and that to kill a flamingo was to invite misfortune. What better name for the ultimate gambling palace? It was settled that Siegel's Las Vegas resort would be called the Flamingo.

Benny Siegel was the obvious choice to head the Flamingo project. Las Vegas had been his brainchild from the beginning, and he had served Lansky and the syndicate well during his years in southern California. There was no reason not to trust him completely with a million dollars of the syndicate's money. There was, on the other hand, something going on in Siegel's private life in 1945 that Lansky and his partners were aware of but chose to overlook. Benny Siegel had always been a notorious womanizer, and had taken out, at one time or another, nearly every star in Hollywood. He also had a nice Jewish wife, the former Esther Krakower, whom everybody liked, and two lovely daughters. Since Esther Siegel must have been aware of her husband's well-publicized philanderings, and since she seemed to accept them, and since after each fling Benny always came home to Esther, no one saw fit to criticize Benny's behavior.

Recently, however, Benny had embarked upon an affair that seemed far more serious than anything he had been involved in before. He was then forty, and may have been undergoing some sort of midlife crisis, but at any rate he fell head over heels in love. The lady's name was Virginia Hill, and she was not even a movie star. She was an empty-headed blonde who had been a sometime model, sometime showgirl, and all-time plaything who liked gangsters. Most of the members of the mob had bedded down with Virginia at one time or another, and no one had any use for her, nor could anyone understand how Benny Siegel could have become so smitten by her. Still, an Old World code, observed by the Russians as well as the Italians in the organization, decreed that a man's sex and domestic lives were his own business, and no one would have dreamed of criticizing Benny's choice of girl friends. Among other things, there was Benny's hot temper to contend with—he had killed people in arguments over matters much more trifling than this. Still, behind his back, Benny's sidekick Mickey Cohen referred to Virginia as “that tart.”

Meyer Lansky knew that things were serious between Benny and Virginia when, that year, Esther Siegel came to him and asked him if there was anything he could do to break up the romance. Sadly, Lansky replied that there was nothing, but he did offer a suggestion. If Esther threatened Benny with a divorce, and demanded custody of the two girls, that might bring Benny to his senses. Esther followed Lansky's advice, and to her dismay, Benny agreed to a divorce on whatever terms Esther wanted.

Meanwhile, construction of the Flamingo proceeded. As promised, the hotel would be the ultimate in luxury. The finest woods, the costliest marbles, the most sumptuous fixtures and appointments were going into it. Each bathroom would have not only its sunken tub, but its own individual plumbing system and—that naughtiest of imports from the European hotel scene—its own porcelain bidet. No cost was being spared, and suppliers from as far away as Denver, San Francisco, and Salt Lake City were shipping their wares to the Flamingo. While other builders were still experiencing postwar shortages and delays, Lansky's and Siegel's friends in the Teamsters union had a way of facilitating shipments. There was alarm, however, when Benny Siegel announced that Virginia Hill had been placed in charge of the hotel's interior decor, and was being given a free rein.

Early in 1946, a meeting was called of the hotel's backers—with Benny Siegel not invited to attend—to discuss what was now no longer called “the project” but “the situation.” A grim-faced Meyer Lansky opened the proceedings to report that the Flamingo was now five million dollars over budget, and the end appeared not yet in sight. In fact, the hotel was not even half completed. Another fact had to be noted. Virginia Hill had been making a number of trips to Europe. Her excuse was that she was purchasing furniture and fabrics for the hotel, but there was also the possibility that she and Benny had been skimming off some of the construction costs, and that Virginia had been depositing the skim in Swiss banks. These suspicions had been confirmed when a Lansky informant in Switzerland advised that Virginia had deposited some five hundred thousand dollars in a numbered Zurich account.

The situation was now very serious. At the 1946 meeting, one of the investors—it is not clear who—suggested that the solution might be that Benny Siegel be “hit.”

Lansky, however, cautioned patience. He had never liked the idea of killing people, and certainly did not like the idea of killing Benny Siegel—a fellow Jew, one of his oldest friends. He had been best man at Benny's wedding. The thing to do, he said, was to get the hotel open and get it making money. Then, if it turned out that Benny had been cheating his partners, Lansky could deal with that, and would get Benny to give the money back.

The logical thought, of course, is that someone might have suggested “hitting” Virginia Hill. But killing a woman was beneath the syndicate’s dignity. The thought, on the other hand, that a mere woman could wield enough power over her lover to cause him to betray and steal from his associates was an intolerable insult to the male sex.

From that meeting on, Lansky knew that his friend Benny was in deep trouble, for not all the others who had money in the Flamingo venture were as moderate-minded as he. He immediately warned Siegel to do everything in his power to get the hotel finished, opened, and producing income as quickly as possible. No further delays or overruns would be tolerated.

Siegel got the point, and his activities toward completing the Flamingo became feverish and frantic. He went so far as to move out of the house at 810 North Linden Drive in Beverly Hills that he had rented for his sweetheart, and to the construction site, where he could oversee matters personally. Workers were now paid overtime and double time, and offered special work-incentive bonuses to make sure that the hotel would be ready for occupancy, and gambling, by the scheduled date of Christmas, 1946. The new urgency to get the Flamingo open, of course, made costs soar even higher. And back in the offices of syndicate members, faces grew longer and darker, while Lansky implored his partners to at least give Benny the chance to open his hotel.

Siegel had announced the gala opening of the Flamingo for the week between Christmas and New Year’s, and he worked desperately to meet that deadline. Later, it would be claimed that his timing was wrong, and that for the entertainment business the days between the two holidays had always been considered the deadest period in the entire year. Siegel, if he was still thinking clearly, may have felt that the opening of a spectacular new hotel might serve as a remedy for that deadness. But as the date of the opening approached, it was clear that much else was wrong.

By mid-December, the hotel was far from finished or ready for occupancy. Only a handful of guest rooms were completely furnished. Then bad luck made matters worse. Siegel had hired a small fleet of Constellations to fly in celebrity guests from Hollywood for the gala opening party on December 26. On the afternoon of departure, bad weather in Los Angeles caused the flights to be canceled. A few movie notables made it—among them Charles Coburn, George Sanders, and Siegel’s old

friend George Raft—only to be received in a lobby that was still festooned with painters' drop cloths and noisy with carpenters' hammering, and guest rooms that were half finished and, in some cases, had no sheets or towels. Some bathrooms had bidets, others just had open spaces in their floors. The air-conditioning worked fitfully, and guests sweltered in the desert heat. The green and untrained staff had not mastered the hotel's layout, or their own routines and duties, and service ranged from slow to nonexistent.

Back in the East, Lansky and the other partners received the grim news: Benny Siegel's opening had been an unmitigated disaster. As usual, "the genius," as Lansky was called, had a stopgap solution. The hotel should immediately close, and the corporation go into receivership. Then the original investors could buy back their shares at ten cents on the dollar, and needed capital would be raised to complete the hotel. But not all the partners were happy, and Lansky contacted Mickey Cohen and alerted him never to leave Benny Siegel's side. His life, Lansky warned, was in danger.

By February, 1947, the Flamingo was still not furnished, and things were not much better in March, when the hotel reopened, and guests checked out complaining of construction noise, room service orders that never came, burned food from the kitchen, telephones that didn't work, and toilets that would not flush. By April, however, things had improved somewhat, and income began to exceed outgo. But the partnership was still heavily in the red, the hotel seemed far from capable of producing the profits Siegel and Lansky had predicted for it, and it was still suffering from the poor word-of-mouth reviews it had received during its first months.

That spring, Benny Siegel and Virginia Hill flew down to Mexico and were married. He had made an honest woman of her at last. But now the pair seemed doomed by the Fates. In Mexico, Virginia supposedly begged Benny to fly with her to Paris. Realizing that her new husband was a marked man in the United States, she suggested that they could live out their lives in Europe on the money she had squirreled away in Swiss banks. If indeed this happened, something—perhaps macho bravado, perhaps fatalism—made Benny insist that they return to Los Angeles, to face whatever was coming to him. Possibly he felt that in a final show of courage he could demonstrate to his partners that he could, after all, behave like a man and not like a sex-ridden adolescent.

For several weeks after their return, there was a period of relative calm for the newlyweds. At the Flamingo things continued to look up. The month of May was better than April, both in quality of the hotel's service and in the profit picture, as the last square of thick carpet was laid, the last glittering chandelier hung, and the last bits of gilt paint and antique mirroring were applied. Siegel may have had good reason to believe that the crisis had at last passed. By mid-June, he was in an expansive mood. The Flamingo's ledger sheet was showing more black ink. Esther Siegel had consented to let Benny's two daughters spend the summer with him. On the afternoon of June 20, Benny had his regular weekly manicure at Harry Drucker's barbershop in Beverly Hills, and talked enthusiastically of how well the Flamingo was doing, and of how the pieces of his life seemed finally to be falling into place. That evening, in the big house on North Linden Drive, Benny Siegel was relaxing with Allen Smiley, an old friend, in the living room. Upstairs, Virginia's brother, "Chick" Hill, was with a girl friend in one of the bedrooms. Virginia was off on one of her trips to Europe, but was due home in a few days. Mickey Cohen, instructed by Lansky never to leave Benny's side, was mysteriously absent. At a few minutes after ten o'clock, the barrel of a .30-30 carbine crashed through a living room windowpane, and eight shots rang out. One tore through Benny's skull, ripping out an eye, and four others plunged into his upper body, through his heart and lungs. Three more bullets went astray, and Allen Smiley was unhurt. That evening, employees of the Flamingo were informed that the hotel was under new management, appointed by Lansky and Company.

The murder of Benny Siegel was never solved. In the investigation that followed, one assumption was that Lansky had ordered the killing. He was the mob's linchpin, the reasoning went, and no one else would have dared to do it. Bitterly, Lansky would always deny that he had ever done such a thing. He had loved Benny Siegel, he insisted, as much as he loved his own sons, his own brothers, his own father. He had done everything in his power to warn Siegel that some members of the syndicate were not happy with his performance, that his murder had been proposed. He had also done everything in his power to persuade his partners to give Siegel time to turn the hotel into a success and that, in fact, the hotel had already rounded the

corner. Esther Siegel, when questioned, also defended Lansky as the last person who would want to see her ex-husband dead.

Another possibility was that Lucky Luciano had ordered the killing. From his exile in Italy, Luciano pooh-poohed the notion. How could he have engineered such a thing from seven thousand miles away? Nonetheless, Luciano still wielded enormous power, personal and financial, in the organization, and he was one of the important silent partners in the Flamingo venture. Only Luciano, it was argued, had sufficient clout to arrange for Mickey Cohen, in defiance of Lansky's orders, to be elsewhere on the night of the murder. As for Cohen, he simply shrugged and said he hadn't been hovering over Siegel because he and Siegel had both assumed the heat was off.

But the heat hadn't been off. And there were any number of disgruntled Flamingo investors who might have decided, acting on their own without consulting anyone, that Benny Siegel had to be eliminated. Not everyone in the syndicate was as fond of Benny as Meyer Lansky was. And Benny had committed the cardinal sin of violating the code of honor among thieves. He had stolen from his brethren. In any case, the 1947 murder gave Benny Siegel a certain distinction: he was the first member of the syndicate's board of directors to be gunned down by one of his own.

The murder left Virginia Hill Siegel alone and unprotected, presumably a very frightened lady. But Lansky knew how to handle her. Once the dust had settled, he quietly approached Virginia and asked her to return whatever money Siegel had passed to her from the hotel's construction budget. Virginia, who knew which side her bread was buttered on, immediately complied. It was as simple as that.

Following Siegel's death, Virginia, insisting that Benny had been the only man she had ever really loved, went into a deep depression and tried, unsuccessfully, to kill herself. There followed years of alcohol and drugs, in which she returned to her old profession in a desultory way. She didn't need to work very hard. A Chicago mobster who had been a long-ago flame still kept her on a regular monthly allowance. In 1966, she finally killed herself with an overdose of barbiturates.

By then, of course, the Flamingo in Las Vegas had become the enormous financial bonanza that Benny Siegel, and Meyer Lansky, had said it would be all along, and all the investors were very happy. The Flamingo had also

become the prototypical Las Vegas hotel, the very cornerstone of the Strip—that garish stretch of outlandish hotels that extends for four miles west of town into the Clark County desert. From the Flamingo outward, hotel followed hotel and casino followed casino, each trying to outdo and out-gimmick the last in extravagance and overstatement and Las Vegas “high class.” From the first days of the Flamingo onward, Las Vegas has grown from a dusty crossroads of sand and sagebrush to a glittering Oz-like metropolis, with a permanent population of well over half a million; an entire city supported by, and devoted to, a single pastime: gambling. It is Benny Siegel’s city.

In Las Vegas today, his name is spoken with reverence and awe. He is to Las Vegas what Benjamin Franklin is to Philadelphia. Las Vegas was Benny Siegel’s vision, his grand design. Had it not been for his dream, there might be nothing there at all.

*Once, in her column, she evoked the poet Robert Browning, and quoted him as saying, “Oh, to be in England, now that it’s May.” The next day, she cheerfully acknowledged her error, and wrote that the line should be, “Oh, to be in England now that May is here.”

ALL THAT MONEY CAN BUY

By the late 1940s, the social and economic dominance of the German Jews in the American Jewish community had all but disappeared, but few of the old German-Jewish upper crust were willing to admit that this had happened. Within the tight and interrelated circle of German-Jewish families, where dynasty had interlocked with dynasty for a hundred years or more, the myth was maintained that the Germans were the “best” Jews, and that the Russians were “riffraff.” All the Germans would concede was that the Russians now outnumbered them, as they did by several millions; what was harder to swallow was the fact that the Russian Jews also outpowered them in nearly every area, from the marketplace to philanthropy.

Some people would trace the demise of German-Jewish overlordship to as far back as 1920, and the death of the patriarchal Jacob H. Schiff, who had been called the conscience of the American Jewish community. Schiff’s mission had been to remind the Jews periodically that they were indeed Jews, with Jewish responsibilities, and it had been he who had headed most of the Jewish social welfare programs that had aided the turn-of-the-century Russian immigrants. Schiff had passed his mantle of Jewish leadership to another German Jew, Louis Marshall, a prominent New York lawyer, but Mr. Marshall had not had the commanding authority or personal charisma of Jacob Schiff. It had been under Marshall’s leadership, however, that the elite German congregation of Temple Emanu-El had begun its plans to move its house of worship from Forty-fifth Street and Fifth Avenue to an even grander address uptown, at Fifth Avenue and Sixty-fifth Street, facing Central Park.

The ostensible reason at the time for the move was noise. Fifth Avenue and Forty-fifth Street had become one of the city's busiest commercial corners. The noise of commerce, Marshall explained, did not bother Christian churches in the neighborhood, since they held their services on Sundays. But Saturdays were heavy shopping days, and members of Temple Emanu-El claimed to find the street sounds disturbing on the day of worship. Not stated was the fact that the move uptown was also an attempt to disassociate themselves, socially, from the continuing uptown movement of former Lower East Siders, from the onslaught of the parvenus, or "the newer element," as the Russians were sometimes called. At the time, upper Fifth Avenue was pretty much the exclusive domain of wealthy Christian families and Old Guard German Jews. The width of Central Park would separate Temple Emanu-El from the "Russian side" on Central Park West, or so the reasoning went.

The real problem seemed to be that Reform Judaism had become *too* popular, *too* successful—so successful that it was difficult for Emanu-El to maintain its traditional German-Jewish exclusivity. When the congregation had first been formed in 1845, its treasury had contained exactly \$28.25, and its first services had been held in a Lower East Side tenement at the corner of Grand and Clinton streets. But the congregation had quickly been able to move to better and better addresses until, by 1868, the temple had been able to build—for six hundred thousand dollars—an entire building of its own, on Fifth Avenue, New York's premiere street, where all the most fashionable Christian churches were.

By 1930, however, when the grand new building, which had cost seven million dollars, opened its doors, the possibility of exclusivity had gone out the window. The upward and outward mobility of the Eastern Europeans had been so rapid that Russian Jews were able to afford the higher rents and taxes of the fashionable Upper East Side now, and were moving there in goodly numbers. Ironically, the new temple's first service was for the funeral of Louis Marshall, and the eulogy was delivered by its first Russian-Jewish head rabbi.

The Old Guard had given way to the new, who had overcome by sheer numbers.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Temple Emanu-El drew Eastern European worshipers like a magnet until, by the late 1940s, Russians

outnumbered Germans by a ratio of something like five to one. The reasons for this dramatic switch from the little Orthodox synagogues of the Lower East Side to this stronghold of the American Reform movement were several. For one thing, there was the physical magnificence of the new Temple Emanu-El itself, with its glorious rose window and its altar framed and valanced with carved woods and glittering handworked mosaics. In size, it ranked behind only the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine and Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, and could seat twenty-five hundred in its main sanctuary, and accommodate at least thirty-five hundred more in an adjacent chapel and auditorium for the High Holidays. Architecturally, it radiated self-confidence and importance.

Then, too, Emanu-El had long been considered New York's most *fashionable* Jewish congregation, and the appeal of fashionability to families moving upward on the economic scale could not be ruled out. All the heads of important Jewish philanthropies had traditionally been Temple Emanu-El members—the presidents of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, Bonds for Israel, the United Jewish Appeal, the American Jewish Committee, the Friends of Hebrew University, and the boards of directors of Hebrew Union College, Montefiore and Mount Sinai hospitals, and the American Jewish Historical Society. Rubbing shoulders with the leaders of the community also had its appeal.

But the most important appeal of Emanu-El and the Reform movement was that they represented a step in the assimilation process, part of the Russians' drive to adapt to the prevailing mode and environment. Reform was more "modern," more "enlightened," more "American." While many of the first-generation immigrants liked to keep a toehold in the Old World—out of habit, out of fear, out of nostalgia—through their Orthodoxy, the second generation wanted to blend in, to move with the times. "My parents were Orthodox, but I'm Reform," became the phrase. Reform meant up-to-date. Everyone knew, for example, that the Jewish dietary laws had become, by the twentieth century, anachronisms and, in the United States, a nuisance. Reform Jews had come right out and said so, and by the 1940s, any Jew who still kept a kosher household was, in the eyes of Reform, either a sentimentalist or a zealot. The reaction of a Midwest housewife is typical: "I used to cook kosher meals when my in-laws came to dinner, but after they died I stopped." To be able to serve what one liked and eat in

restaurants where one wished was part of entering the American mainstream.

Meanwhile, signs that the Russian Jews had become Temple Emanu-El's dominant group were apparent at the temple itself. Some changes were cosmetic. In the old days of German-Jewish leadership, for example, the temple's board of trustees had dressed in black tie for their meetings in the paneled, portrait-hung boardroom. This practice was abandoned by the Russians as stuffy and old hat. The Russians also proposed that the facade of the building be floodlit at night. The German minority cringed at this notion, considering it "too showy." But, the Russians countered, bathing the Fifth Avenue face of the building with floodlights would result in a lovely light being cast through the stained-glass rose window for evening services. In the end, the building's architecture defeated this project. The designer of the rose window, it seemed, had made it of the heaviest glass to withstand the rays of the afternoon sun. Only a floodlight with the intensity of the sun would penetrate the glass at night.

Other changes were liturgical. The new Eastern European leadership decided that it would also be a nice idea to broadcast the temple's Friday evening services over New York's WQXR radio station every week. Once more, the Germans were opposed, calling the idea "publicity-seeking," and "evangelizing through the media." But the proposal was passed, and the Russians could boast of their new, much larger, "radio congregation." (When the radio congregation began sending in checks to the temple, the Germans' mutterings diminished somewhat.) In 1872, the then all-German temple had abandoned the practice of conducting bar mitzvahs as "barbaric." But the Russians, it seemed, liked bar mitzvahs, and so the practice was resumed under the new leadership.

Faced with such changes, some old German families withdrew their support from Temple Emanu-El. Alas, that didn't seem to matter much. Their support was no longer needed. Others merely carped and complained, calling the Russian newcomers "the Emanu-Elbowers—they've elbowed their way in." True or not, they were in to stay.

Bastions of German-Jewish supremacy were falling on all sides by the 1940s. Down on Wall Street, the staid old investment banking firm of Goldman, Sachs was feeling it. (The interrelated Goldman and Sachs families were among America's pioneering German Jews.) For years, all the

partners in the firm had been either Goldmans or Sachs, but then, fresh out of P.S. 13 in Brooklyn, came a bright youngster named Sidney Weinberg. The Russian-born lad had spent some time looking across the harbor at the towering financial district of lower Manhattan, and decided that that was where the money was. He had gone, by his own account, “to the top of the tallest building” in the district, and started working his way down, floor by floor, asking for jobs at each elevator stop. He had made it all the way down to the second floor before he found Goldman, Sachs, where he was hired as an office boy. By 1947, Sidney Weinberg was the firm’s senior partner, and was the principal architect of a high-financial plan by which the heirs of Henry Ford, Sr., were saved hundreds of millions of dollars in inheritance taxes. In Weinberg’s design, Ford’s heirs were left in control of the Ford Motor Company, while the bulk of the \$625,000,000 estate was placed tax-free in the Ford Foundation, making it the richest philanthropic organization in the history of the world. The Ford heirs’ federal tax bill amounted to only \$21,000,000 on a taxable estate of \$70,000,000. Sidney Weinberg’s bill for this service? A little over \$2,000,000.*

Social barriers against Russian Jews were also tumbling. At the Century Country Club, which considered itself not only the best Jewish club in New York but the best Jewish country club on earth, and where the anti-Russian bias had been all but written into the bylaws for generations, a few Russians were now being cautiously taken in as members, and one of the first of these, in 1948, was the Flatbush-born Dr. Herman Tarnower, the son of Russian immigrants. At the time, the club’s variance from standard practice was explained by the fact that Tarnower was “a nice doctor,” many of whose patients were Century members. But the hard facts were economic—as German Jews died out, or slipped quietly across the border into Christianity, the Century needed new members to support it. The only candidates were Russians.

The same thing was happening at the equally exclusive men’s club, the Harmonie, in Manhattan. Founded by German Jews in 1852, the Harmonie Club’s minutes and records had all been kept in German until America’s entry into the First World War, and a portrait of the German kaiser had hung prominently in the entrance lobby. The lavish club, with such athletic facilities as squash courts and a swimming pool, sat on a costly piece of real

estate on East Sixtieth Street, just off Fifth Avenue, and, if anything, was even more expensive than the Century to staff and maintain. An infusion of new blood, and money, was needed. This could be achieved only by taking in Russian members. It would not be long before a member of the Harmonie's board, addressing a meeting in a heavy Russian accent, would want to know why, if the Harmonie was originally a German-Jewish club, and was now a Russian-Jewish club, the menus in the dining room were printed in French and not in Yiddish that everyone could understand.

In 1937, the Radio Corporation of America had raised its president's salary to a hundred thousand dollars a year, making David Sarnoff one of a small handful of Americans with a six-figure income in that Depression year. His salary was more than that of the President of the United States. That same year, Sarnoff and his wife, Lizette, had also purchased their first Manhattan town house at 44 East Seventy-first Street, a block from Fifth Avenue and Central Park and a few blocks from Temple Emanu-El, where Sarnoff had also been made a trustee.

The house, in the heart of WASP country, though a few German-Jewish Loebes, Lehmans, Lewisohns, and Warburgs lived nearby, was one of the finest in the city. It contained over thirty rooms on six stories, connected by a private elevator. Its ceilings were high, its scale grand. On the ground floor was a large paneled formal dining room, from which French doors led out into a capacious private city garden landscaped with boxwood, evergreens, and fruit trees. On the second floor was the principal sitting room, which was decorated in an Oriental motif, taking its theme from a series of ancient Chinese murals that had been set into the walls. On this floor, too, there was a screening room, where the Sarnoffs could entertain their guests with previews of the latest RKO films, shipped to him from Hollywood. Adjoining this was David Sarnoff's "radio center," powered and equipped so that he could pick up almost any radio station in the world—as well as tune in and monitor the goings-on at his National Broadcasting Company rehearsal studios.

The third floor was the family floor, and contained the Sarnoffs' bedrooms, dressing rooms, and baths, as well as the bedrooms and baths of their three sons, Bobby, Eddie, and Tommy. The fourth floor, however, was entirely David Sarnoff's, and was the most extraordinary collection of

rooms in the house—his private sheikhdom. It was part office, part library, part club, and part shrine to Sarnoff's personal achievement. A long central gallery was filled with testimonials and memorabilia—the awards, citations, plaques, medals, and honorary university degrees with which he had been presented, even though he had never earned a high school diploma. Mounted, lighted, displayed on shelves and in illuminated cases, arrayed for inspection, were also the silver and bronze cups, bowls, beakers, and figurines he had been awarded. On shelves, in thick leather covers, lay bound copies of all his speeches, and other leather albums were filled with newspaper clippings chronicling his career. Everywhere, in silver and leather frames, were autographed photographs of David Sarnoff smiling and shaking hands with important people—Woodrow Wilson, Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, Albert Einstein, Guglielmo Marconi, Arturo Toscanini, as well as all the NBC radio stars.

Off the museumlike gallery, or “memory room,” as Sarnoff called it, was a clublike lounge, with a fully equipped bar (though Sarnoff was a teetotaler), card tables (though he never played cards), many deep leather chairs and sofas, and a temperature-controlled humidifier for the oversize cigars that he puffed on constantly. From this part of the house, it was also possible to get the impression that the unathletic Sarnoff was an outdoorsman and big-game hunter. Heads and tusks and horns of wild beasts adorned the walls—lion, panther, impala, dik-dik, leopard, wild boar. An elephant's foot had been fashioned into a wastebasket. A giant marlin arched, stuffed and mounted, above the bar, and mummified game birds posed inside bell jars. The taxidermic menagerie in this trophy room was, however, misleading. Sarnoff, if pressed, would admit that he had never pulled a trigger or baited a fishhook in his life, and that all the carnage had been done by others.

The fifth floor contained servants' rooms, and on the top floor of the house guest bedrooms opened out onto a huge trellis-shaded roof garden, with a spectacular view of the mid-town skyline, including the new RCA Building. And on this level, too, David Sarnoff had given himself a particular indulgence—his private barbershop.

Throughout the house, meanwhile, on every level and in virtually every room, were television sets. Some were concealed behind sliding doors, and

others were treated as pieces of furniture. There was never a clear-cut way of counting the sets, since they were changed and rearranged and replaced with such frequency, but there were usually at least three dozen in the Sarnoff house at any given time. To most Americans, of course, television came as a post–World War II phenomenon, but Sarnoff had been trying out various television receivers since the early 1930s, and television had been more than a glimmer in his eye as far back as 1923, when, in a memorandum to his company, he had pondered the future of the medium as he saw it then:

I believe that television, which is the technical name for seeing instead of hearing by radio, will come to pass in due course.

Already, pictures have been sent across the Atlantic by radio. Experimental, of course, but it points the way to future possibilities....

I also believe that transmission and reception of motion pictures by radio will be worked out in the next decade. This would result in important events or interesting dramatic presentations being literally broadcast by radio and, thereafter, received in individual homes or auditoriums where the original scene will be re-enacted on a screen, with much the appearance of present day motion pictures....

The problem is technically similar to that of radio telephony though of more complicated nature—but within the range of technical achievement. Therefore it may be that every broadcast receiver for home use in the future will also be equipped with a television adjunct by which the instrument will make it possible to see as well as to hear what is going on in the broadcast station.

If that description of television sounds a little loose and imprecise, Sarnoff had a better grasp on the idea a year later when he told an audience at the University of Missouri in 1924: “Think of your family, sitting down of an evening in the comfort of your own home, not only listening to the dialogue but seeing the action of a play given on a stage hundreds of miles away; not only listening to a sermon but watching every play of emotion on the preacher’s face as he exhorts the congregation to the path of religion.” And, by 1927, he had expanded the idea even farther and said, “If we let

our imagination plunge ahead, we may also dream of television in faithful colors.”

David Sarnoff was neither a scientist nor an inventor, and so it is not possible to say that either he or the scientists and engineers who worked for RCA actually *invented* television. As early as 1880, Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, had taken out patents for television devices, and in the mid-1920s both General Electric and the American Telephone Company had succeeded in beaming moving pictures across considerable distances. Sarnoff’s genius lay, not in inventing things, but in seeing the commercial possibilities of other people’s inventions. Like so many other Eastern European entrepreneurs, he was a skillful adapter of the ideas of others. As such, he made his company the first to put serious time and money into the development of television broadcasting, and Sarnoff himself became the country’s most ardent spokesman for the new medium. RCA scientists and technicians worked on perfecting television transmission and reception throughout the 1930s, and, with typical showmanship, Sarnoff was able to unveil the company’s device at the RCA Pavilion at the 1939 New York World’s Fair.

The RCA Pavilion became one of the fair’s biggest attractions, and long lines of people formed to watch the astonishing new gadgets called television sets. (Cameras had been arranged so that fair visitors could actually see themselves passing across the tiny screens.) As a result of the pavilion’s popularity, several hundred people purchased the rather costly RCA sets—for about six hundred dollars apiece—and so, though further development of commercial television was halted by the war, a few Americans were able to watch a very limited program schedule during the war years.

There were problems to be faced, of course. NBC’s rival network, the Columbia Broadcasting System, did not manufacture television sets. Sarnoff’s company, on the other hand, did, and once the war was over, planned to manufacture and market them in a big way. Thus, as the two networks lined up to do battle over television programming, wartime viewers were treated daily to this curious announcement from CBS television stations:

Good evening. We hope you will enjoy our programs. The Columbia Broadcasting System, however, is not engaged in the manufacture of television receiving sets and does not want you to consider these broadcasts as inducements to purchase television sets at this time. Because of a number of conditions which are not within our control, we cannot foresee how long this television broadcasting schedule will continue.

Viewers might not have had any idea what CBS was trying to say, but to RCA it was gallingly clear—don't buy television sets, there are many bugs to be worked out still, and we are not at all sure that television is here to stay. Sarnoff, of course, was stumping the country with the opposite message, trying to whip up Americans into a frenzy of excitement and anticipation for the Age of Television that would dawn as soon as the war was over. At the same time, RCA and Sarnoff could see competition building from other electronics manufacturers—General Electric (which was no longer associated with RCA), Philco, Dumont, and a number of smaller companies. Sarnoff, however, was determined to make RCA synonymous with television. He almost succeeded.

One of the biggest hurdles that the whole television industry would have to surmount, meanwhile, was the vociferous opposition of privately owned American radio stations. Most station owners did not agree with Sarnoff's views that television and radio could share the airwaves and coexist compatibly. Most were convinced that television would destroy the radio industry. In radio editorials across the country, David Sarnoff was denounced as a "televisionary," and listeners were confidently told that television would never work. In at least one national advertisement by an association of radio broadcasters, David Sarnoff was caricatured as King Kong crushing poor little radio beneath his simian heel. Unfazed by these outcries, Sarnoff and RCA marched on with the development of television.

In 1944, the Television Broadcasters Association bestowed another of the long series of awards and honors on Sarnoff, and it was perhaps the one that would please him the most. At the association's annual dinner, Sarnoff was named "Father of American Television." The award went straight to the wall of his fourth-floor gallery on East Seventy-first Street.

By the late 1940s, he had been proved right about radio as well. Radio and television could coexist, and RCA's new sets contained radio dials as well as television screens. To be sure, television would change radio programming drastically; there would be a period of readjustment as the radio soap operas and big comedy shows flew off to the television screen, and radio settled down to music, news, and talk. And now that television had finally come of age, Sarnoff did not mind at all that much of the general public—remembering the thrill of seeing it for the first time at the RCA Pavilion—assumed that television was an RCA invention, nor did he protest being labeled the “father” of it. His contribution had been, if anything, more important. He had learned about television just as he had learned about radio, had had a hunch that it could be made to work somehow or other, and had kept his company persistently at it until it did.

Throughout all those years, Hollywood—mysteriously—had been much less foresighted. In the late 1930s, Sam Goldwyn had said, “I don't think this television thing is going to work. But what the hell—if it turns out that it does, we'll just buy it.”

By 1950, however, the Radio Corporation of America was not for sale.

A television set and a home in the suburbs—these were the two things Americans seemed to want the most in the years immediately following the war, and a forest of television antennas would become one of the symbols of suburbia. Historically, after a war, real estate values become depressed, and a number of economists had predicted that this would happen after World War II. But—helped in part by GI loans—the real estate market boomed, particularly in the suburbs of large cities, and new houses went up by the hundreds of thousands.

The war had also changed the demography of such cities as New York. As had happened following the first war, a new influx of poor blacks was moving up from the rural South, and another wave of immigrants was arriving from the island of Puerto Rico. The pale, pinched faces of New Yorkers that Helena Rubinstein had noticed a number of years earlier were now less in evidence, and the city had taken on a decidedly swarthy cast. The new metropolitan black population had expanded the traditional boundaries of Harlem—to the north, south, and west—and now practically all the Manhattan real estate north of Ninety-sixth Street, between the East

River and Washington Heights, fell under the designation of “Harlem.” Harlem now even extended into the South and East Bronx, and the once-proud Grand Concourse and its crowning jewel, the Concourse Plaza Hotel, wore a sad and seedy look as middle-class Jews moved out in the face of the advancing black population. It was a pattern that would be observed in a number of American cities, as a neighborhood first “went Jewish,” and then, making way for the next ethnic group that was struggling up from poverty, “went black.” And since Jews frequently retained their properties in their former neighborhoods, becoming absentee landlords, a social problem between blacks and Jews would be created that is evident to this day.

From the South and central Bronx, some Jewish families moved westward, to the bosky and pleasant reaches of the West Bronx and Riverdale, overlooking the Hudson River. Still more moved northward, into suburban Westchester County, and owning a house in Westchester would become the newest Jewish status symbol. In Westchester, moneyed Christian families had already taken dibs on the most desirable waterfront properties, along the Hudson and Long Island Sound, but pleasantly rural stretches in the interior of the county, in Scarsdale, Harrison, Purchase, and White Plains, were still available for development. To be sure, some inland communities—most notably Bronxville—remained restricted against Jews by gentlemen’s agreements. (Bronxville’s Jewish merchants could not live in Bronxville.) And longtime Christian residents of Westchester County would complain that the postwar movement into the county was responsible for a “Bronxification” of Westchester, as more suburban shopping centers, restaurants, bars, motels, and high-rise apartment houses went up.

Still, Westchester was a country club place. Most of its social life revolved around its clubs, and golf and tennis were its symbols—the first golf course in America had been laid out there. Though there were many clubs that would not take Jewish members, there were nearly as many Jewish clubs, many of them quite luxurious. Even the huge, glossy Westchester Country Club, where the tone was predominantly Roman Catholic, had, during the hard financial times of the Depression, taken in a few Jewish families, and once the barrier had gone down, it was difficult to put it back up again. One of the appeals of Westchester was the fact that it appeared to be an area where Jews and Christians could live pleasantly and

comfortably side by side. The town of Scarsdale, for example, by the early 1950s had a population that was roughly evenly divided between Jews and Christians, and Scarsdale was considered the prototype upscale New York suburb.

Another appeal of Westchester was its reputation for an excellent public school system. Scarsdale High School boasted of an academic record equal to such top New England boarding schools as Exeter and Andover, and regularly sent its graduates to the leading Ivy League and Seven Sisters colleges.

There was also a postwar Jewish movement to the near suburbs of Long Island. Here again, the North Shore “Gold Coast” of Nassau County, with its high bluffs commanding views of Long Island Sound, had been preempted by the Christian rich (though Otto Kahn, a German Jew, had a large estate at Cold Spring Harbor). But attractive real estate was available on the flatter land of the South Shore, particularly around Hewlett Harbor. Here the Five Towns—Hewlett, Cedarhurst, Woodmere, Lawrence, and Inwood—became a snug enclave of new-made Jewish money. Lives that had begun on the Lower East Side and had passed through the Grand Concourse tended to continue a northward trek into Westchester County. Others from the Lower East Side, who had graduated to Brooklyn, gravitated farther east on the island to the Five Towns.

Many American Jews today, who have since moved on to even more prestigious addresses, recall the cozy postwar days of the Five Towns with bittersweet nostalgia. For children, growing up in the Five Towns was a rather special experience. Everyone, it seemed, knew almost everyone else, and children’s parents all visited one another. The neighborliness and closeness was like that of the Lower East Side, but with trees, lawns, gardens, an occasional swimming pool, clean sidewalks, and quiet, well-policed streets. In place of the fire escape there was the backyard patio. Some people in the Five Towns lived in apartments, but every family who could afford one wanted its own home, its own piece of America.

The architectural styles of the Five Towns were all carefully in keeping with those favored by the Christian majority—tidy Colonials, red-brick Georgians, exposed-beam Tudors—a touch of Mount Vernon here, a dash of Nantucket there, and a bit of Olde England for good measure. Little in the Five Towns was built in the Spanish, Italian, or French style, nor was

anything Oriental or Moorish or, Lord knew, Russian. And yet there was something about life in the Five Towns that was confining and insular, a sense of physical and emotional separation—of being right in the mainstream of New York life, on a main commuting stem of the Long Island Rail Road, and yet somehow cut off from it. Though the area was not set apart by walls, the invisible barrier of the ghetto could be felt beyond the manicured shrubbery, the well-dressed windows, and the shiny new tricycles. Not on the main line of the Long Island Rail Road, but on the Rockaway Branch, the area was called “the Peninsula,” because it was a dead end—not on the way to anywhere, but a destination. The writer Sue Kaufman, who grew up in Lawrence, used to clench her fists in angry frustration whenever she was reminded of the Five Towns. For her, it had been a stifling experience. She called the towns “a golden ghetto.”

But others recall the special privacy of the towns. “Be civil, but strange, with the neighbors,” one mother advised her children. And there was also the beachfront, Atlantic Ocean closeness to nature, and what were considered the salubrious effects of “good sea air.” Not that the Five Towns comprised a completely homogeneous community. On the contrary, there were marked differences among the various villages. In Hewlett, for instance, Jews were in the minority, and at least one area of Lawrence was restricted. In Woodmere, there was a sizable German-Jewish population, and it was difficult for an Eastern European to become a member of such German-Jewish clubs as the Inwood Beach Club. And yet, of the five communities, Woodmere had the most status.

In Cedarhurst and Lawrence, the balance between Germans and Russians was more equal, and, though census figures do not reveal such distinctions, there were probably more Russians in Lawrence than Germans—at least those who recall the situation felt that way. And yet both the Lawrence Beach Club and the Atlantic Beach Club were restricted against Jews.

Inwood had the least social status of the five communities. It was in Inwood, as well as in parts of Cedarhurst and Lawrence—literally on the other side of the Long Island Rail Road tracks—that the *schwartzes*, or blacks, who provided household help for the better-off lived. Also in Inwood lived a number of Italian families and a smattering of Irish—many of whom had originally come to help build the railroad, and who had stayed on to work as domestics, gardeners, construction workers, carpenters, and

house painters. There were parts of Inwood that were actually considered dangerous, and Jewish children were warned not to walk through the black “Sugar Hill” section after dark. Still, Inwood was an essential fifth to the other four towns. It was the servants’ quarters.

Binding the little clutch of townships together, giving them a sense of specialness and clubbiness, was Woodmere Academy, a private day school. Though the Five Towns boasted excellent public schools, in its academic heyday in the late 1940s, Woodmere Academy was rated equal to the New England prep schools, and its school spirit was considered remarkable. Woodmere graduates went sailing on to Harvard, Princeton, and Columbia, where the sons of tailors-turned-garment manufacturers studied to be lawyers, doctors, and engineers. If the ethnic cast of Woodmere Academy seemed to be more Eastern European than German, it was perhaps because immigrant parents were particularly ambitious for their children, and would not settle for less than an academy education. What City College meant in the 1920s, Woodmere Academy meant in the 1940s. Acceptance at Woodmere carried great cachet, and as a result the school was snobbish and clannish, and added in no small measure to that curiously insular Five Towns feeling. At Woodmere, *they* became *we*, and the others were simply the others.

Best of all, when one moved out of one of the five boroughs of New York City into one of the Five Towns on Long Island, it seemed like the American dream come true—because what symbolized the American dream after the war better than the suburbs? A house of one’s own, unheard-of in the old country, with that marvelous capitalist invention, a mortgage; an automobile; a maid; a fine private school; a country club—what was missing? Only, perhaps, a sense of history. The Five Towns businessmen who gathered each morning on the commuter platforms of the Long Island Rail Road worked at various occupations, but the principal endeavor of the Five Towns seemed to be the erasure of memory. The Five Towns were places to forget the pushcart past, and though it might not really be forgotten, the past was diverted as far back into the consciousness as possible. It was the *ordinariness*, the everydayness, of the place that seemed to be in such sharp contrast with the struggle it had taken to get there. Only the old grandparents, living in guest rooms with pretty wallpaper and comfortable chairs and radios, could tell what it had been

like and what it all meant, but the children were too busy to listen. Or, when the children asked their grandparents what it had been like growing up on the Lower East Side, or in Russia, the reply would be, “Don’t ask!”

Years later, in the 1980s, when the area south of Houston Street in Manhattan called SoHo became actually fashionable, and when young people were converting Lower East Side lofts into roomy studios and apartments, the granddaughter of a Five Towns woman told her grandmother that she was moving into a SoHo loft. The older woman looked at her granddaughter with shocked disbelief. “And your grandfather and I worked so hard to get out of Hester Street!” she cried.

*That the automobile pioneer’s estate should have hired Weinberg to shelter it from taxes was in itself remarkable, considering the senior Ford’s unabashed anti-Semitism.

Part Three

HERE WE ARE: 1951–

CROWN PRINCES

An obituary notice in the *New York Times* in the late 1960s told an interesting story to those who make a hobby of reading between the lines. It announced the death of MRS. ROBERT LEVY, CIVIC WORKER, 69. “Mrs. Levy,” the account began, “who was active in civic and philanthropic affairs,... was born in New York September 27, 1897, the daughter of Jesse Isador Straus and Irma Nathan Straus.” The Strauses were a proud old New York German-Jewish family, but Mrs. Levy’s mother was descended from even prouder Jewish stock—the Sephardic Nathans, who could trace their ancestry back to the first Jewish settlers in America in 1654, and, according to at least one Nathan family genealogist, even farther, to a union between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. For Jesse Isador Straus, therefore, the marriage had represented a social step up. “Her father,” the account continued, “was president of R. H. Macy & Company, Inc., and served as United States Ambassador to France from 1933 to 1936.” The account did not include the fact that Mrs. Levy’s grandfather was the Isador Straus who had gone down with the *Titanic*, and that Mrs. Levy’s father had been one of the privileged few New Yorkers permitted to enter David Sarnoff’s radio studio atop Wanamaker’s to await word of survivors. The obituary continued with a few words about the career of Beatrice Nathan Straus Levy’s husband, a prominent cardiologist, and their surviving children, and concluded with the words, “A memorial service for Mrs. Levy will be held ... at St. James Episcopal Church, Madison Avenue and 71st Street.”

Thus three great Jewish strains had been brought together in America—the Sephardic Nathans, the German Strauses, and the humble Russian Levys—only to earn interment from Saint James’s, Manhattan’s most

fashionable Protestant church. It was a story, one might say, of total assimilation. And it added a bittersweet postscript to the assertion *kol Yisrael hem chaverim*—all of Israel are brethren.

Still, the Christianizing saga of Nathan/Straus/Levy told only a part of the story of what was happening to Jews in America in the second half of the twentieth century. Not many years later, in Cincinnati, young Calman Levine II was bar mitzvahed in an elaborate ceremony in that city's fashionable Plum Street Temple, the Reform congregation founded by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise. Though young Levine was the only one of five brothers to have chosen the rite, it, too, represented another form of assimilation—from the Orthodoxy of his namesake grandfather into the “liberal enlightenment” of American Reform Judaism. This rite of passage might, to an older generation, have been seen as a kind of obituary. And if various Nathans and Strauses—not to mention Levys!—might have been spinning in their graves at the news of the Episcopalian memorial, so might the original Calman Levine's father at the news of his great-grandson's conversion to Reform.

Calman Levine had died a bitter man, the victim, as he would always see it, of Sam Bronfman's long struggle for respectability, for admission—assimilation—into the society of rich and cultivated and philanthropic men and women in the United States and Canada of which he so desperately longed to be a part, to rid himself of the “goddamn bootlegger” label that seemed to have attached itself to his name. He had tried high-class advertising. He had even tried the pious approach of urging Americans to drink *less*. Keying this theme to the leading Christian holiday, the Christmas season of tipping and jollity, he had started, as early as 1934, an annual Seagram's advertising campaign in hundreds of newspapers across the United States that proclaimed, WE WHO MAKE WHISKEY SAY: DRINK MODERATELY. The high moral tone of these advertisements and Seagram's stand against drunkenness drew praise from Wets and Drys alike, from the clergy and from the judiciary, but they did not get Mr. Sam into the Mount Royal Club. It began to seem as though nothing would.

Mr. Sam had also tried to polish his tarnished image by hiring prominent Christians, and placing them in high positions in his company. Brigadier General Frank Schwengel of the United States Army Reserve was hired and placed in charge of U.S. sales for Seagram's. Fred Willkie was brought in to

oversee Seagram's production at the company's distillery in Louisville. Mr. Willkie's chief qualifications for the post seemed to be that his brother, Wendell L. Willkie, had been a Republican candidate for the United States presidency, and that the Willkies were blue-blooded descendants of the old New York Wendell family, and were in the *Social Register*.

It was Fred Willkie's arrival at Seagram's that spelled the end of Calman Levine's career with the company. The two men did not see eye to eye from the beginning. It was Mr. Willkie's notion, furthermore, to hire scientists to supervise the blending of Seagram's products. Mr. Levine's celebrated nose and palate, he implied, were not enough to assure the blends' scientific uniformity. Mr. Levine, understandably, vociferously defended his ancient master-blender's craft. But Mr. Willkie disagreed, and, despite Mr. Sam's often-repeated maxim that "distilling is a science, but blending is an art," he apparently got Mr. Sam on his side. Mr. Levine wrote a number of memorandums to Mr. Sam, complaining about the new order of things under the Willkie regime in Louisville. Typically, these went unanswered, as did any expressions of disagreement with company policy. (Mr. Sam had explained unequivocally enough what *that* was: "I am company policy!") Finally, Levine wrote what amounted to an ultimatum: either he or Fred Willkie would have to go. The response from above was that Mr. Levine would be relieved of his duties in Louisville, and would be sent on a speaking tour around the country to extol the superiority of Seagram's blends.

For the man who had created Seagram's best-selling brand, this situation rankled, and soon the word of Calman Levine's unhappiness reached the ear of one of Lewis Rosenstiel's informants. Rosenstiel responded by making Levine a handsome offer at Schenley's, and Levine decided to accept it. He brought the news of his decision to Mr. Sam.

Mr. Sam sprang from his chair in his Chrysler Building office, screaming, "*You go to my enemy!*" He then proceeded to hurl one of his most explosive strings of curses, threats, imprecations, and verbal abuse at his longtime employee. The tirade lasted fully half an hour, and at the close of it Levine was close to tears. Then Mr. Sam ordered Levine bodily removed from his office.

Though the Schenley job offered a much better salary—Lew Rosenstiel was less miserly than Mr. Sam—Calman Levine never really recovered

from the emotional wringer he had been put through that afternoon, and remained resentful about his Seagram experience to the end of his days.

In addition to having developed Seagram's flagship whiskey, Levine had performed many extra services for Mr. Sam far beyond the regular line of duty. Once, when a Polish scientist in Italy had claimed to have invented a liquor that produced a pleasant high, but was not intoxicating—"elation without inebriation," the scientist called it—Mr. Sam asked Levine to check on it. Levine made a special trip to Italy and Vienna to meet with the man, but was not impressed with his concoction, which, among other traits, left an unpleasant film on the inside of a glass. Levine recommended against acquiring the patent. (The scientist was later declared insane.) Levine had also been instrumental in curbing some of Mr. Sam's more harebrained notions. No one at Seagram really knew how the popular vogue of ordering "Seven and Seven"—a jigger of Seven Crown mixed with Seven-Up—began, though the trend seemed to have started in the Midwest. Widespread as this bar order became, it irked Mr. Sam that his whiskey was giving a free word-of-mouth-advertising ride to a soft-drink company. He had asked Calman Levine to look into the feasibility of a sparkling whiskey—a Seven Crown with Seven-Up flavor and sparkle built right into the bottle. Using an ordinary siphon with a carbon dioxide cartridge, Levine was able to demonstrate that the carbonation of whiskey worked havoc on its flavor.

Finally, the split with Seagram saddened Levine because he had considered Mr. Sam his personal friend. Levine and his wife had dined often with the Bronfmans at Belvedere Castle. At holiday times the two families had regularly exchanged gifts of fruit and delicacies. The Bronfman and Levine children had gone to summer camp together at Camp Algonquin in the Adirondacks, and a Levine governess had become a Bronfman governess. But Sam Bronfman never forgave a defection, and from that moment all communication between the two families ceased. The grudge would be borne into the next generation. Years later, Calman Levine's daughter Rita would try to telephone one of her old playmates in New York, only to be told by a secretary, "This call is not welcome."

Like the pharaohs of old, who caused the names and achievements of their predecessors to be effaced from their monuments and temples, the name of Calman Levine, who had perfected American blended whiskey and revolutionized the drinking tastes and habits of Americans, was expunged

from the corporate history of Joseph E. Seagram and Sons. In *The Story of Seagram's Seven Crown*, which the company published in 1972, Levine's name was not mentioned. Instead, the inventor of the blend had become Samuel Bronfman.

In the meantime, Sam Bronfman himself may have had good reason for bitterness. None of the honors he had expected from Canada had been bestowed upon him. The knighthood, the governorship of McGill University, a directorship of the Bank of Montreal (where he was the largest depositor), the club memberships, the seat on the Canadian Senate he had tried to buy, the ambassadorships—all had eluded him. In 1951, now in his sixties and perhaps weary of his long and unsuccessful social climb north of the border, Mr. Sam purchased a large estate in Tarrytown, in New York's Westchester County. Since it overlooked the Hudson at Tappan Zee, he renamed this new castle Belvedere too, and, in a series of elaborate parties, began to woo new American friends.* Next door to Mr. Sam's new Belvedere stood Lyndhurst, the castle built by the railroad tycoon Jay Gould. In it lived Gould's daughter Anna, by then the Duchesse de Tallyrand-Périgord. The duchess, however, did not invite her new neighbors to her entertainments.

Then, in 1953, there were two events that buoyed Sam Bronfman's spirits somewhat. The first was the marriage of his elder daughter, Minda, to the French banker Baron Alain de Gunzburg, whom she had met while he was a student at the Harvard Business School. In Paris, the Gunzburgs, who were German Jews, were considered bankers almost, if not quite, on the level of the Rothschilds, to whom they were distantly related. (Baron Guy de Rothschild's mother was a first cousin of Alain de Gunzburg's grandmother.) Now at least someone in the family had a title, even if it wasn't Mr. Sam, though the new baroness's treatment of her rank at her wedding seemed a little cruel. When her father went to kiss the bride, Minda said, "But Father, don't you know that you should *bow* to a baroness?"

The second, just as startling event of that year was the marriage of Mr. Sam's elder son, Edgar, to Ann Margaret Loeb, the German-Jewish daughter of the John L. Loeb of New York, and the granddaughter of the founder of the investment house of C. M. Loeb Rhoades and Company.

Miss Loeb's mother was a Lehman, her maternal grandmother a Lewisohn, and her paternal grandmother a Sephardic Moses, whose family had been plantation owners in the Old South. The Bronfman-Loeb union shocked New York's German-Jewish Old Guard. "But those Bronfmans," said Mrs. Arthur Lehman, "have just come down out of the *trees*." It was confidently predicted that the marriage would not last. Indeed, it didn't.

Just three years earlier, another intergalactic marriage had equally unsettled the German-Jewish Old Guard. After marrying and divorcing a popular young—and Roman Catholic—Manhattan socialite named Esmé O'Brien, David Sarnoff's son Bobby had married Felicia Schiff Warburg. If anything, Miss Warburg's German lineage was even more distinguished than Miss Loeb's. Her uncle was the banker-yachtsman-philanthropist Felix Warburg. Her grandfather was Jacob H. Schiff. One of her great-grandfathers was Solomon Loeb, the Kuhn, Loeb founding partner, and one of the "old" Loebes. The John L. Loebes, who had come from Germany later and were unrelated, were "new" Loebes. Warburg cousins were Seligmans, Kahns, and Kuhns. At the time of the Warburg-Sarnoff nuptials, Robert Sarnoff was identified by one of the clannish German-Jewish crowd as "the son of that Russian radio man." It was predicted that this Russian-German mesalliance also would not last, and, indeed, it did not.

Of course it wasn't easy being the son of a self-made tycoon. "Somebody up there likes him" became the private joke at NBC about Bobby Sarnoff's rapid rise from the sales department, in 1948, to the presidency of the network in 1955, at which point he began climbing the corporate ladder of the parent company. He would be named chairman of the board and chief executive officer of RCA by 1970, when still a youthful fifty-two. All these promotions occurred under the watchful eye, and powerful parental thumb, of the founding father. The relationship between father and son was ambivalent. On the one hand, David Sarnoff was proud of his son's ability to fill his shoes. On the other, he was suspicious, questioning his son's every move and every idea, openly critical of some of Robert Sarnoff's more farfetched "predictions."* It made for a relationship that was uneasy, at best, with each man constantly challenging and testing the other.

One of the problems with the self-made men was that, as their companies grew from virtual one-man operations to giant multi-national corporations, their businesses exceeded their personal grasp. It was no longer possible for

the one man at the top to keep a finger in every part of the corporate pie, to keep track of what every scattered department head was doing. By the 1950s, Mr. Sam Bronfman's dictum, "*I am company policy,*" no longer made much sense since, with thousands of stockholders to account to, corps of lawyers and scientists and advertising experts whose advice had to be taken into consideration, Seagram's company policy was really out of Mr. Sam's hands altogether. His company had taken on a giant life of its own, and Mr. Sam was little more than a figurehead. Still, men like this had trouble relinquishing their sole and final authority. It was difficult for Mr. Sam to delegate authority to others, and hard for him to accept the fact that there were some decisions that were going to be made without him.

Still, he continued to try to run Seagram's as a one-man show, continually poking his head into offices to make sure that his people were doing the jobs assigned them, asking for reports from regional sales heads and account executives, scrutinizing contracts and merger documents that he no longer fully understood, always certain that the moment his attention wandered, dirty deals would be pulled behind his back. Mr. Sam had often said that one of the secrets of his success was "work, hard work," and it was difficult for him to adjust to the fact that the hardest work was now being done by teams of others, or by sophisticated machines; that much of his company was automated and no longer needed, or wanted, his personal supervision. Still, he would not let go the reins.

Because of the boss's mercurial nature, the personnel of the Seagram executive suite lived in a state of perpetual terror, and in a perpetual revolving door. Not even their weekends were free, for Mr. Sam thought nothing of calling a secretary on a Saturday night or a Sunday morning to fire off his orders and commands. Higher-ups learned that the most effective way of dealing with Mr. Sam was to give him a wide berth. In *Bronfman Dynasty*, the Canadian writer Peter C. Newman tells the tale of Frank Marshall, a director of export sales who so dreaded confrontations with the boss that he arranged to be out of town whenever Mr. Sam was *in town*—an easy thing to do since Marshall's duties carried him all over the world. Marshall even kept a packed suitcase in his office so that, in case Mr. Sam made a surprise visit, he could be out the door and on his way to the airport and to some foreign shore where Seagram's did business before the boss collared him.

After a while, however, Mr. Sam began to realize that it had been a long time since he had seen his export director, and the word went out: “Find Marshall. Mr. Sam wants to see him.” Still Marshall managed to be elusive.

In 1951, Seagram’s celebrated Mr. Sam’s “official” sixtieth birthday, though he was actually sixty-two, with a gala dinner in the ballroom of Montreal’s Windsor Hotel. There were the usual windy speeches and presentations extolling the genius and generosity of the company’s worthy founder, and recitations of the successes of all the years past. Then the evening turned to what were intended to be more lighthearted matters. An elaborate film had been prepared as a spoof of some of the activities of Seagram’s executives. A screen was lowered, the lights were dimmed, the movie began, and, as Peter Newman relates it:

Sam was sitting in the front row ... enjoying himself hugely, laughing as he watched scenes of slightly tipsy Egyptian army officers toasting one another with Crown Royal on the terrace of Shepherd’s Hotel in Cairo. This was followed by a long-shot of a Bedouin riding a camel toward the Pyramids, bottle tucked into his burnoose. The camel approached the camera. Sam suddenly sat up, peering at its swaying rider. The focus was much tighter now, and the “Bedouin,” it became clear, was none other than Frank Marshall in long nightshirt with a fez on his head, brandishing a bottle of V.O.

Sam leaped out of his chair. Pointing excitedly toward the image of his errant export manager, he bellowed at the screen, “There’s the son of a bitch! That’s where he’s been spending his time! Riding a goddamn camel!”

It was a while before Sam had calmed down, and the movie could proceed.

Someone in the company had to take on the job of being Mr. Sam’s handmaiden and at his constant beck and call. In Hollywood a similar system had evolved for the care and feeding of the movie moguls. Sam Marx, a former story editor at MGM, has recalled how once, on the studio lot, he encountered L. B. Mayer strolling down the sidewalk, an attentive secretary at his side. Mayer and Marx fell into a conversation, and the secretary excused herself. Then the two men parted, and walked off in

different directions. Presently the secretary reappeared, running down the sidewalk after Mr. Marx, crying, “Where’s L.B.?” Marx replied that he had last seen him walking off in a northerly direction. “My God!” cried the secretary. *“He must never be left alone!”*

It was no different with Mr. Sam. On his travels, an underling had to be assigned to accompany him. For one short airplane trip, during which there would be no meal service, an elaborate airborne picnic had been planned. Once they were in the air, however, and Mr. Sam had announced that he was ready to eat, the luckless aide realized that he had left the picnic basket behind in the trunk of his car. Mr. Sam jumped from his seat and began marching up and down the aisle of the plane, pointing at his cowering assistant and shouting to all the other passengers, “See him, there he is! There’s the goddamned fool! I’m surrounded by lunatics!”

Though Peter Newman’s book, from its title onward, tries to make the case that Sam Bronfman saw himself as the founder of a family “dynasty,” most of the Eastern European tycoons seem to have been rather reluctant dynasts. Unlike the European House of Rothschild, or the interrelated German-Jewish families of New York, where positions of power and trust were doled out to family members generation after generation, the Russian Jews, when they practiced nepotism, tended to give their relatives big titles but little authority, and to keep them close to home, where they could be kept out of trouble, and monitor their every move. Sam and Frances Goldwyn’s son, Sam Jr., was given the title of producer in the Goldwyn organization, but was given almost nothing of importance to do. Helena Rubinstein, who had at least a dozen relatives on her payroll—sisters, nieces, nephews—never let it be forgotten that she, and only she, made all final decisions. On her two sons, Horace and Roy, she continued to blow hot and cold, praising them as geniuses in one breath, calling them stupid fools in the next. The boys would be handed challenging assignments one day, only to have them taken away the day following. Meanwhile, as her cosmetics empire grew, the command post became Madame Rubinstein’s bedroom on the bottom floor of her Park Avenue triplex. Here, on an extraordinary Lucite bed, its head- and footboards eerily illuminated with hidden fluorescent lights, the plump little president pushed telephone buttons, scrawled uncertainly spelled memorandums, ate lunch—wiping her fingers on the coverlet and blowing her nose into the satin sheets—and, as

she grew older, worked on her will. This massive document was rewritten almost daily, as relatives who had displeased her temporarily were written out of it and then, if they had managed to redeem themselves, written back into it again. It was a will that, on her death in 1965, would reveal her as one of the richest women in the world. She was either ninety-four or ninety-nine, and her personal fortune was over one hundred million dollars. The bulk of it went not to her sons, but to a foundation for “Women and Children.”

At Seagram, Mr. Sam’s elder son, Edgar, was assumed to be the crown prince and heir apparent. But, again, Edgar Bronfman was given titles in the company but little in the way of authority, as Mr. Sam continued to test his son’s “readiness.” Physically, Edgar resembled his pudgy father not at all. Tall, slender, dark, and handsome—even dashing—he looked like a youthful version of the actor Joseph Cotten. He also had a reputation for enjoying high living—nightclubs, fast cars, motorcycles, and the company of film stars. His father often accused him of being a “playboy.” But there was a toughness about Edgar that he had inherited from his father, and a quick temper, and employees at Seagram quickly learned to treat Edgar Bronfman with extreme respect. Edgar was shrewd. He had waited until he was old enough—shades of the days of the czars’ forced conscriptions of Russian Jews!—to escape being drafted into the United States Army, before he became an American citizen. He and his wife then proceeded to build the first full-scale estate that had been built in Westchester County in over a generation—manor house, tennis court, stables, garages, pool, pool house, helicopter landing pad—hard by what amounted to the family compound of his wife’s German-Jewish relatives, the Lehmans, Lewisohns, and Loebes.

In the 1950s, a writer for the old *Holiday* magazine described Edgar’s new house as “a huge Georgian pile,” and Edgar was not amused. The editor of *Holiday*, Ted Patrick, was summarily summoned to appear, along with the writer of the story, at Edgar’s office to apologize for the slight. The threat, if this was not done, was that Seagram’s would cancel all its advertising in all Curtis magazines. These, at the time, included not only *Holiday* but the *Saturday Evening Post*. The Bronfman ultimatum was delivered to Ted Patrick while he was on a train between New York and Washington. Patrick’s reply was: “Tell Mr. Bronfman to fuck himself.”

Later, Patrick would admit that he had taken this stand with some trepidation. The *Saturday Evening Post* was already in shaky financial circumstances, and the loss of Seagram's advertising would amount to several million dollars a year. But, in the end, Patrick's hunch proved right. Seagram did not cancel its Curtis budget—reportedly because Mr. Sam had called his son into his office and reprimanded him for overstepping himself, muttering gruffly, “We advertise in those magazines because we need *them*, not because they need *us*.”

But though the episode ended as a tempest in a teapot, it showed that Edgar Bronfman was a man to be reckoned with.

In the summer of 1957, Edgar Bronfman, then twenty-eight, confronted his father and told him that it was time for him to be made president of Joseph E. Seagram and Sons. Mr. Sam disagreed, and took the position that Edgar might be better suited to work in a field other than the liquor business. A stormy scene followed, at the end of which Edgar stood up and said, “If you're saying that the company isn't good enough for me, then I don't want to work for it.” It sounded like another ultimatum and Mr. Sam, after consulting with his wife, knuckled under, and gave Edgar what he wanted.

This might never have happened, however, had not Mr. Sam, over the previous few years, made an important marketing mistake for Seagram's—one of the very few mistakes, if not the only one, that he would ever admit to making in his life. He had refused to take seriously the growing popularity of vodka in the United States. He had been repeatedly advised by others in the company, including his son, of the trend toward vodka, and had been urged to get into the vodka business. But Mr. Sam, ever the believer in the supremacy of blended whiskeys, refused to accept the fact that Americans would take up a drink that had absolutely no taste or aroma, and one that was associated with Soviet Russia to boot. By the late 1950s, with competing companies capitalizing on the new vodka craze, Mr. Sam—while stubbornly maintaining that the fad would not last—reluctantly agreed that his judgment had been wrong. His son then had the exquisite pleasure of telling his overbearing father, “I told you so.”

A great deal has been written about Italian-American “crime families” in which sons were trained to follow in their fathers' footsteps. But Jewish

criminals, with whom the Italians frequently did business, had different notions. Though, like the Italians, they were family men, the Jews did not have dynastic ambitions for their sons to succeed them in lives of crime—the “Godfather” syndrome, as it were. On the contrary, the Jewish gangsters usually saw to it that their children were educated in the finest boarding schools and colleges, and that they were otherwise steered into lives of traditional American upper-class respectability and civic rectitude. Their sons were educated to be doctors, lawyers, scientists, and they guided their daughters into marriages with solid, upstanding young men who had charge accounts at Brooks Brothers. For the most part, the family of the Jewish gangster was kept unaware of what the breadwinner did for a living. (“In real estate,” Meyer Lansky’s wife would say, which, in a sense, was true.) As Mickey Cohen put it, “We had a code of ethics like the ones among bankers, other people in other walks of life, that one never involved his wife or family in his work.” Like the socialists and reformers, the Jewish gangsters saw an American system that was skewed and bent in favor of the rich and well-established, where the cards were stacked against the immigrant and the poor. Gangsterism offered a simple shortcut, outside the system, to money and power and social mobility. Once these had been achieved, the next generation was supposed to give the family “a good name.”

At the same time, there was still a kind of begrudging admiration for the Jewish criminal in the Jewish community at large. For one thing, he competed physically, and successfully, with the non-Jewish enemy, showing the hostile and violent anti-Semite that he could be beaten at his own game. When the Jews of Europe were under threat of annihilation, the gangster offered American Jews a secret and vicarious sense of satisfaction and pride.

The fact was that the gangsters provided a real social service to the Jewish community, as protectors and defenders of their own people. At a time when America was awash with anti-Semitism coming from high places—Henry Ford, the Ku Klux Klan, Gerald L. K. Smith, Father Charles Coughlin, the German-American Bund—the Jewish community appreciated anyone who would come to its defense, regardless of the means. Meyer Lansky’s men had helped break up Bund rallies in New York and New Jersey. In Detroit, Jewish mobsters had saved Jewish peddlers and store

owners from having to pay protection money to Polish and Italian hoodlums. In Chicago, more than five thousand Jews had turned out for the funeral of the Lansky-connected gangster Samuel “Nails” Morton to express their gratitude for his helping to protect poorer neighborhoods against raids by anti-Semitic and Jew-baiting Irish and Italians. In a sense, men like Morton were community servants, and in a sense, they were good Americans. And their children would be even better.

This was certainly the attitude of Meyer Lansky. Lansky liked to recall how, as a boy, he had watched in bewilderment as the older Jews in his Delancey Street neighborhood shuffled past—in their *yarmulkes* and prayer shawls, with beards and side curls—on their daily rounds of worship at the synagogues and yeshivas. “Where are they going, I asked myself? Where were they getting in the new world? They had simply carried the old world across the ocean with them. They had gone nowhere. They were going nowhere. They were at a dead end.”

Lansky, who had gone far, was determined that his children would go much farther. He was devastated when his first son, Bernard, suffered a birth trauma that resulted in a diagnosis of cerebral palsy, and Lansky was told that Buddy, as he was called, would be severely handicapped for the rest of his life. But his second son, Paul, was born normal and healthy, to Lansky’s great relief, and it was on Paul that he centered his ambitions. He doted, meanwhile, on his daughter, Sandra, who was called Sally. But the children were soon a cause of dissension between Lansky and his wife.

For one thing, Anna Lansky accused her husband of blaming her for Buddy’s pathetic disability. She also accused him of spoiling Sally with too many expensive toys and gifts. And, as for Paul, Anna Lansky wanted her son to be a rabbi. Lansky had quite a different plan for Paul. He wanted to send his healthy son to West Point, and have him become an American army officer. These disagreements ended, in 1947, with the Lanskys’ divorce. The following year he married Thelma Scheer Schwartz, a pretty blond divorcée who had been his manicurist in the barbershop of the Embassy Hotel in Miami Beach. “Teddy” Lansky was five years younger and several inches taller than her new husband, but these discrepancies seemed to bother the newlyweds not at all, and theirs would be a long and singularly happy marriage.

Of his three children, the only one he would permit to work for his organization was the crippled Buddy, and Lansky saw to it that Buddy was employed only in licit businesses—in one of the hotels Lansky operated legally in Florida, Nevada, or Cuba, where Buddy worked as a switchboard operator. Of course, it would be darkly suggested that its switchboard was a hotel's nerve center, and that Buddy's real assignment was to tap and monitor calls between underworld figures and other important guests. Lansky himself ridiculed this suggestion, pointing out that a simple, sedentary job as a telephone operator was probably the only sort of work poor Buddy would ever be able to perform in life. Even at that chore, Buddy was frustratingly slow.

Sally Lansky was sent to the exclusive Pine Crest School in Fort Lauderdale, where she earned very good grades. After graduating, she delighted Lansky with her marriage to a Jewish boy named Marvin Rappaport. The Rappaports were old family friends from Prohibition days, and were now legitimately and respectably in the liquor business.

Meanwhile, Lansky moved forward with his plan to have Paul appointed to the United States Military Academy.

A gangster's son at West Point! It seemed an idea right out of a Hollywood movie. It seemed an impossible dream. But Lansky wanted Paul to be shaped into a true American, and in the service of his country. (This unswerving patriotism was rather typical of Jewish gangsters, despite the fact that they had gotten rich by bending America's laws.) And the dream came true, as most things in Meyer Lansky's life had a way of doing. Despite a deep undercurrent of anti-Semitism at West Point, Paul Lansky received his appointment. (Like many sons of immigrants, Paul was taller, huskier, and handsomer than his father.) How had Lansky done it? Naturally there were mutterings that he knew and dealt with a number of important Washington politicians, many of whom were bribable. Meyer Lansky would always hotly deny that any bribery or arm-twisting was involved in getting Paul his appointment; he had got it on his own academic and athletic merits—and, indeed, that appeared to be the case.

At West Point, Paul Lansky comported himself admirably. One of his roommates was the son of Colonel Monroe E. Freeman, an aide to General Eisenhower. After graduating in 1954, Paul became a captain in the air force, and an ace pilot in the Korean War. Following that, he toured

American college and university campuses as a lecturer and recruiter. In the latter capacity, he was considered one of the finest in the military—a salesman of American ideals in war and in peace.

When Paul had married and Meyer Lansky's first grandson was born, Paul informed his father that the baby was to be named Meyer Lansky II. Lansky was appalled, and begged his son not to do this. So much ill fame had gathered around the name of Meyer Lansky, he argued, that it seemed unfair to ask this child to bear the same burden for the rest of his life. But Paul was adamant. He was proud of his father, and wanted to honor him this way. Lansky was deeply touched.

When Eisenhower was elected President in 1952, Meyer Lansky was rather surprised to receive, through Colonel Freeman, an invitation to the inaugural and ball. Feeling that it would be inappropriate for someone of his tarnished reputation to attend the inauguration ceremonies of a United States President, Lansky demurred. Colonel Freeman wrote back, "Don't you know that in our clubs we play the same slot machines that you've got in your casinos, and that we used to drink your bootleg whiskey?"

Lansky was touched by this sentiment as well. But, ever the gentleman, always the believer in seemliness and propriety, Meyer Lansky nonetheless wired back his regrets.

*He never took out American citizenship papers, however, in the faint hope that the Canadian honors might still someday be forthcoming.

*In 1959, for example, Robert Sarnoff predicted that "for home use the 1969 set will replace the present picture tube with a thin, flat screen that can be hung on the wall like a painting."

WITCH-HUNTING

The 1950s were troubled times for the entertainment industry. With the war over, but with wartime energies still at a peak, America once again turned, with superpatriotic zeal, to the task of rooting out enemies, real or imagined, at home. It was the same kind of sentiment that had gripped the country after the first war, and that had brought Rose Pastor Stokes to trial for sedition. Soviet Russia had been America's ally in the second war, but that no longer mattered, and Russia was now America's archenemy again. Communists and Communist sympathizers were suspected of lurking in high places, and the target of the Red hunt became show business, and particularly that "pervasive shaper of American thought," the motion picture industry.

The Communist witch-hunts of the early 1950s were not motivated by anti-Semitism exactly—at least, no one on the House Un-American Activities Committee had the courage to come right out and say so. But, since the movie business was heavily Jewish, and most of HUAC's targets in Hollywood were Jews, the effect was the same. And, though the cause of Russian-Jewish radicalism—in Hollywood and elsewhere—had been quiescent for at least a dozen years, as American Communists had become disillusioned with the party in the wake of news of Stalin's excesses in the 1930s, the phrase "Jewish radical" still had an inflammatory ring. The idea that Jewish radicals pervaded the film industry was an easy one for the committee to sell to the public, which had been whipped into a frenzy of fear that Russia was about to conquer the world. And, of course, Hollywood, with all its connotations of wealth, glamour, and excess, made an obviously tempting target for HUAC. The subpoenaing of movie stars to

testify as to their political leanings assured the committee that its abundance of anti-Communist zeal would be well publicized.

Hollywood had foreseen the committee hearings. As early as 1947, a meeting of studio heads had convened in New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. With not at all the best intentions in the world, but hoping to purge itself of leftist undersirables before Washington stepped in to tell it what to do, this group of movie men had compiled a "Hollywood Black List," composed of the names of some three hundred men and women known or suspected to have Communist sympathies. The effects of the blacklist were immediate and dire. The list spread from Hollywood to Broadway, from television studios to Madison Avenue advertising agencies, as those listed were dismissed from their jobs in film, radio, television, and the theater. A chill swept through the entertainment world, as old friends and associates eyed each other cautiously, never certain who would or would not name names of other leftists in order to save a career. The quality of television programming and film content suffered.

Once named, those blacklisted had either to work pseudonymously, to change their names, or to work at a fraction of their former worth. In *Scoundrel Time*, Lillian Hellman wrote that, after she was blacklisted, her annual income plummeted from \$140,000 to \$10,000 and that, after it dropped even lower, she was forced to work part-time in a department store to make ends meet. One of her un-American "crimes," it seemed, had been to write an anti-Nazi play, *Watch on the Rhine*. In Hollywood, the director Irving Pichel was blacklisted for his "un-American" film *A Medal for Benny*, which depicted Mexican-Americans in a sympathetic light.

Although the number of people implicated amounted to only one-half of one percent of the total number employed in the entertainment industry, the repercussions were enormous. Some people changed their occupations, some emigrated, and a few took their own lives. Even those not blacklisted were affected. The director Lewis Milestone, born in Russia, was not on the blacklist, but had had the temerity to hire Ring Lardner, Jr.—one of the so-called Hollywood Ten who refused to tell the committee whether they were Communists or not—to write one of his films. This created guilt by association, and Hedda Hopper wrote in her column, "Let's take a look at Lardner's new boss. He was born in Russia and came to this country years ago.... He has a beautiful home in which he holds leftist rallies, is married

to an American and has a fortune here. But still his heart seems to yearn for Russia. Wonder if Joe [Stalin] would take him back?" Milestone was out of a job for the next eleven years.

Looking back, some of the testimony heard soberly at the HUAC hearings seems so absurd that one wonders why it was not laughed out of court. But by then no one was laughing. Dalton Trumbo, who, in fact, had joined the Communist party in 1943, was another of the Hollywood Ten—all of whom would draw prison sentences—and the committee heard Ginger Rogers's tearful mother, Lela Rogers, tell of how her daughter had been forced to utter the "Communist line" in Trumbo's film *Tender Comrade*: "Share and share alike—that's democracy." The fact that the romantic comedy had the word *comrade* in its title did not go unnoted.

During the dark years of the HUAC hearings, it seemed to matter not how one testified. Whether one denied vigorously that he had ever been a Communist; whether one refused to testify; whether one came forward as a "friendly witness"; whether one admitted to having once been a Communist, but had since seen the error of one's ways; whether one confessed that one was still a Communist; or whether one sought the protection of the First and Fifth amendments—the results were the same. The very fact that one had been summoned before the committee at all was enough to make one an unemployable pariah in the entertainment industry.

The case of the actor Howard Da Silva was typical. Born Howard Silverblatt, he had made over forty films between 1939 and 1951, and had worked for every major studio. But when, at the Hollywood HUAC hearings, actor Robert Taylor in the role of a friendly witness testified that Da Silva "always had something to say at the wrong time" at meetings of the Screen Actors Guild, that seemingly petty and innocuous remark was enough to finish Da Silva's career in Hollywood. He had just finished filming *Slaughter Trail* for RKO. After Taylor's testimony, the film's producer announced that Da Silva's part would be cut from the film, and that it would be reshot with another actor. Da Silva moved to New York and tried to work in radio, but American Legion posts all over the country assailed his sponsors with so much hostile mail that he was dropped. He was out of work for more than a dozen years, and did not find a major role until 1976, when he was cast in the Broadway musical *1776*—ironically, in the part of the American patriot Benjamin Franklin.

Blacklisted in the early 1950s, Zero Mostel denied that he had ever been a Communist, though he had lent his name to such causes as the National Negro Congress and the Spanish Refugee Appeal of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee. His denials did no good, and his acting career was aborted. He turned to painting. He did not attain stardom until 1964, when he portrayed the legendary Tevye in Broadway's *Fiddler on the Roof*. Even more pathetic was the case of John Garfield. Born in the Bronx, he had sweet-tough good looks and a streetwise manner that had made him a major film star in tough-guy roles. By all accounts, Garfield was not very bright, and in his HUAC appearance his behavior was neither tough nor heroic. Meekly pleading that he had never been a Communist, and could therefore name no names of party cell members, he nonetheless tried to ingratiate himself with the committee by thanking it for the good work it was doing protecting innocent citizens from the "Red Menace." His denials cut no ice with the Hollywood establishment. Blacklisted, he could find no one who would hire him. He turned to Broadway, and worked for as little as a hundred dollars a week. But HUAC was not through with him. He was called before the committee again in connection with some canceled checks supposedly written by him to the Communist party. Though this evidence was never presented, Garfield decided on the mea-culpa approach and hired a public-relations expert to try to clear his name. A confessional article for *Look* magazine was ghosted for him, called "I Was a Sucker for a Left Hook," in which he took the position that he had been unwittingly duped into joining leftist causes. Before it was printed, John Garfield died of a heart attack at the age of thirty-nine.

The most tragic case was that of the actor Phillip Loeb. By 1948, "The Goldbergs," starring Gertrude Berg, had become radio's longest-running daytime serial. It had been on the air since 1929. In 1949, "The Goldbergs" moved from radio onto the television screen, and became one of television's earliest hits. Phillip Loeb had played Molly Goldberg's husband from almost the beginning, and by 1950 he was making thirty thousand dollars a year and had been voted by the Boys' Clubs of America "Television's Father of the Year." But that same year his name appeared seventeen times in *Red Channels*, a listing of alleged Communists employed in the television industry that was published by an independent group of professional Red hunters.

Phillip Loeb had been a veteran of World War I, and had served in Europe with the U.S. Army Medical Corps. His most political activity had been, as an actor, in his union, Actors Equity. But in 1940 the Dies Committee had charged that Equity was run by Communists, to which Loeb had responded, “I am not a Communist, Communist sympathizer, or fellow traveler, and I have nothing to fear from an impartial inquiry.”

“The Goldbergs” struggled through the 1950–1951 season, but was under heavy pressure from its sponsor, General Foods, to drop Loeb from the cast. Gertrude Berg, without whom there would have been no show, talked with her co-star and came away persuaded of his innocence. Together, they decided to fight back. But in 1951, General Foods fulfilled its threats and withdrew its sponsorship, and the show was dropped by CBS. David Sarnoff, certain that both the show and Phillip Loeb’s career were salvageable, quickly picked it up for NBC, but by then no other sponsors could be found. Reluctantly, Gertrude Berg decided that it was better to fire one actor from her show than to close it entirely, and put some forty other actors out of work, and offered Loeb eighty-five thousand dollars for the balance of his contract. Loeb refused the money, but agreed to leave the show. In 1952, “The Goldbergs” returned to the air with another actor, Harold Stone, in the role of Jake Goldberg. But the old chemistry of the two actors was not the same. The ratings declined, and the show went off the air in 1955.

Phillip Loeb, meanwhile, could have used the money. A schizophrenic son in a private mental hospital was costing him twelve thousand dollars a year, and now not only HUAC but the Internal Revenue Service was after him, investigating possible tax delinquencies. His troubles were also costing him a sizable amount in legal fees. Loeb removed his son from the private sanitarium, and placed him in a Veterans Administration hospital. He could find no work. For a while, he moved in with his old friends Kate and Zero Mostel. Deeply depressed, he began talking about yearning for some “long peace.” On September 1, 1955, he checked into the seedy old Taft Hotel on Broadway under the alias of Fred Lange of Philadelphia—a name that could be roughly translated as “long peace.” There he swallowed a lethal dose of sleeping pills.

Through all this, interestingly enough, the kingpins of the entertainment business—the Sam Goldwyns, the L. B. Mayers, the David Sarnoffs—never

had their loyalty questioned, were never accused of being Reds, and were never blacklisted, though they were all as Russian-born as Lewis Milestone. It was only the underlings who were singled out for persecution—the writers, directors, actors, who took their orders from above. This was odd because it could be inferred that HUAC assumed that the big motion picture and television producers were unaware of the kind of pro-Red propaganda they were turning out, that the studio heads and television presidents had been subverted by those lower down the corporate ladder—on the face of it an unlikely possibility. There was the fact, of course, that the original blacklist had been drawn up by the studio heads themselves. This meant that they were policing their organizations against undesirables and disloyal elements, and that their own loyalties to the flag could therefore not be questioned.

But there is another fact, more subtle, to be taken into consideration in examining why the tycoons of the entertainment industry escaped having to account for their politics before groups such as HUAC, while the punishment was passed along to their salaried employees. The fact is that most of the industry leaders had crossed the invisible borderline that separated “Jew” from “American,” which, in turn, meant Christian. During the HUAC era, and the McCarthy period that followed closely on its tail, it was better to be Christian than Jewish. At the hearings, the Christian Savior was frequently invoked. It was as though the soldiers of Christ marched under an American banner, while Russia was the anti-Christ. Hedda Hopper, albeit no doubt unwittingly, expressed this sentiment when she referred to Lewis Milestone as a “Russian,” and his wife as an “American.” On the surface, it was a ridiculous distinction. Lewis Milestone was an American citizen in as good standing as Miss Hopper. But Milestone had not been *born* an American. It was a case of native versus foreigner.

But then why was Lewis Milestone more a foreigner than, say, the Russian-born Louis B. Mayer or Samuel Goldwyn? For one thing, both Mayer and Goldwyn had gone a step farther. They had not only married native-born Americans, but they had married non-Jewish Americans. That meant that they were trying harder to be *real* Americans, didn't it? Their hearts, and their loyalties, had to be in the right places, while others, like Lewis Milestone, were just using their token Americanism as a cover-up for nefarious and alien thoughts and ideologies and deeds. Their citizenship

didn't matter. They were in America, Miss Hopper suggested, only on some trumped-up pretext that was probably subversive, and only on borrowed time. If they can't think and behave like the rest of us, she seemed to say, better to get rid of the lot of them. In her little gossip-column item, which destroyed Milestone's career, she was absentmindedly writing a sort of WASP obituary for America's Russian Jews who had not assimilated sufficiently.

By the same token, no one in the 1950s would have questioned the Russian-born Irving Berlin's American loyalties, and this had little to do with the blithely patriotic nature of some of Berlin's most popular songs. He, too, had proved himself by marrying an American, and Christian, woman. She was a young *New Yorker* writer named Ellin Mackay, but there was more to her story than that. She was a granddaughter of an Irish Catholic immigrant named John William Mackay, who, in the 1840s, had struck it rich in the Comstock Lode, and found himself a two-fifths owner of the richest gold and silver mine in the world. His son, Clarence Mackay, Ellin's father, had gone sailing into the American upper crust, had married the aristocratic Katherine Alexander Duer, and had settled down to a life of moneyed leisure at Harbor Point, his estate on Long Island's North Shore, where, in 1924, the Mackays had given a memorable private dinner and ball for the visiting Prince of Wales.

A year after the ball, in an article for the *New Yorker* called "The Declining Function," Ellin Mackay had written, "Modern girls are conscious of the importance of their own identity, and they marry whom they choose, satisfied to satisfy themselves. They are not so keenly aware, as were their parents, of the vast difference between a brilliant match and a *mésalliance*."

A year after those prophetic words were published, and to the much-publicized consternation of her Roman Catholic parents, she proved she meant what she was saying when she made her mesalliance with the young Russian-Jewish composer. The Berlin-Mackay nuptials created even more stir in the press than the Stokes-Pastor marriage of two decades earlier. But the Berlins' would prove a lasting union.

Of course, one does not stop being Jewish simply by marrying out of the faith, and, by the 1950s, an even more interesting phenomenon had been

taking place.

Dorothy Schiff, the former publisher of the *New York Post*, once said, “As to being Jewish, C. P. Snow wrote that once you reach a certain financial level, people don’t think of you as anything but rich.” Mrs. Schiff happened to be speaking as a German Jew, whose Frankfurt-born grandfather, the legendary Jacob, had emigrated to America in 1865. But by the 1950s it seemed possible that the Russian Jews, who had emigrated a full generation later, had chosen to follow the German mode. The richest Eastern Europeans had become what their parents and grandparents once deplored about the Germans—“only a little bit Jewish.” Their Jewishness had been relegated to the privacy of their homes, families, and temples and synagogues, if any. Their public facade was that of Americans—successful, rich Americans. If Ben Hecht had conducted his little three-man survey about David Selznick in the 1950s, instead of the 1940s, he might have got quite a different consensus.

In Hollywood, as we have seen, the great movie producers had deep ambivalence about their Jewishness—particularly once they became rich. Toward the end of his life, Louis B. Mayer, perhaps influenced by his friend Cardinal Spellman, seriously considered converting to Roman Catholicism. As the man who was drawing the highest salary of anyone in the United States, he once commented that he considered himself a good future candidate for sainthood. Harry Cohn, the despotic head of Columbia Pictures, entered life a Russian Jew, and left it a Roman Catholic. Sam Goldwyn’s Catholic wife once said that her husband had expressed the wish that they could both become Episcopalians. “After all,” he said, “Goldwyn doesn’t sound like a Jewish name”—which of course was why he had chosen it. But by the 1950s it didn’t matter. He was rich.

In the world of radio and television, this conscious non-Semitic facade had become if anything more pronounced, as though the newer media had decided to follow the de-Semitization guidelines laid down by the Hollywood of old. Though the boardrooms of the three major networks had become largely populated by descendants of Russian Jews, the out-front faces that the public saw would be the Christian ones of Walter Cronkite, John Chancellor, David Brinkley, Chet Huntley, Dan Rather, Roger Mudd, Harry Reasoner, and Howard K. Smith. As a result, the general public would not think of television as a Jewish enterprise—simply as a rich one.

Meanwhile, had Rose Pastor Stokes still been around in the 1950s, and had she been a film star or screenwriter, she would have been a sitting duck for something like the House Un-American Activities Committee. She was not rich (she'd muffed that chance). She'd been an avowed Communist (a founder of the American Communist party), even though her crusade had to be accounted a failure. And anti-Russian sentiments were running much stronger in the United States than they had been when Rose was in her fiery prime. She'd probably have gone to jail, and Hedda Hopper probably would have wanted her deported.

In the long run, of course, Miss Hopper's little obituary for Russian Jews who had not quite "made it" would not be taken seriously. But it would represent a kind of WASP blind spot that other American non-Jews would occasionally reveal. The Jews were *foreigners*, citizens of the United States or not.

James Graham Phelps Stokes's second, and Christian, wife would deliver the same sort of innocent obituary about Rose and her "breed" many years later. Showing the same blind spot, revealing the same misunderstanding of what Rose had been all about, Lettice Sands Stokes would also manage, in her appraisal of Rose, to get some of her facts mixed up.

James G. Phelps Stokes died in 1960, still a member of all his prestigious WASP clubs—the University, the Church, the Pilgrims, the Sons of the American Revolution, the Society of Colonial Wars. By then his widow could only speak vaguely of Rose's role in her late husband's life. "I would have liked to have *met* her," she recalled,

because she was from all I'd heard a very—*colorful* character, beautiful, with magnificent red hair. But *my* Graham [Mrs. Stokes would seem to make a distinction between her Graham and Rose's Graham] never liked to talk about her much. He was interested in settlement work, and improving living and working conditions on the Lower East Side, and so was she. He admired her, and wanted to help her. But he felt he couldn't just *give* her money and so, to help her, he married her. It was not a passionate love affair, I gather, the way most are. It was more of a meeting of the minds, I suppose. But then she became interested and involved in the Bolshevik uprising, joined them,

and went to Russia to fight with them. [Actually, Rose took no active part in the Russian revolution, although she did visit Russia afterward to see how the new system was working.] She came home and tried to obstruct the war effort and the draft—*my* Graham was in the Fourteenth Squadron of the United States National Guard at the time—and she landed in Fort Leavenworth. My Graham had the *devil* of a time trying to get her out. [In fact, Rose was never jailed and was free on bond pending her appeal.] It was very hard on him. Every time either one of them stepped out of doors there were photographers and reporters asking questions. She became a full-fledged Communist. My husband was interested in social problems until the day he died, but never to that extent. He was never a radical. They were separated for a long time, and the divorce was as quiet as he could make it, with no scandal. But it was a tragic story. She was *foreign*, you see, and not accustomed to our ways.

“PEOPLE WHO ARE SOLID”

To American Jews in general, in their second and third American generations, there was a new and nagging question of how much commitment to—or rejection of—the new State of Israel was expected of them. There was no doubt that the creation of Israel enhanced American Jews’ feelings of self-worth, but there was more to it than that. Along with the guarded new sense of pride in nationhood came a more sobering responsibility, for now Jews everywhere would be asked, or expected, to shoulder the criticism whenever Israel was involved in anything that was less than honorable—Jewish terrorists, for example—and would resent being unjustly asked to share the blame for any of Israel’s mistakes. If Israel could be counted upon to be always in the right, that would be one thing. But that was an unrealistic hope for any country, new or old, and if ever Israel seemed demonstrably in the wrong, would that redound to the discredit of American Jews? Alas, it would seem so. This knowledge that Jews would be expected to respond with either patriotism or apology, depending upon how Israel was being perceived at any given moment in the eyes of the rest of the world, would create another subtle reason for Jewish sensitivity, touchiness. If American Jews had already learned to live in two communities, Israel added a third kind of emotional citizenship. It was a large order.

Many prominent American Jews made it a point to take at least one token trip to Israel in demonstration of support for the new country. David Sarnoff’s was in the summer of 1952, when the Weizmann Institute of Science presented him with its first honorary fellowship. In 1957, Sam Bronfman donated the Biblical and Archeological Museum to Israel, but did

not actually visit the country until five years later, when he presided over the dedication of a new wing for the Israeli Museum in Jerusalem, for which he had given an even million dollars. But his principal benefactions remained on the North American continent, such as the Saidye Bronfman Cultural Center in Montreal, and the Bronfman Science Center at Williams College, in Massachusetts.

Others, however, have been more ambivalent. Typical of these is Jack Rosenthal, deputy editorial-page editor of the *New York Times*, who has said, “I was born in Palestine—but my parents had the sense to get out quickly, when I was three years old. I have no memory of it, and I’ve never been back. I feel no emotional attachment to Israel—only a kind of abstract curiosity. I feel the same way about Tokyo—another place I’d like to visit someday.”

But at least one wealthy American Jew longed for a peaceful refuge in Israel, and, ironically, it would be denied him. This was Meyer Lansky. “America—Love It or Leave It” was a slogan bruited about by certain superpatriotic types in the 1960s, in answer to the demonstrations of the New Left. But in Lansky’s case, at least as far as the United States government was concerned, the principle seemed to be, “America—Love It or Stay.” He had been accused, both in the press and in the courts, of virtually every heinous crime against society—of drug trafficking, prostitution, running numbers and protection rackets, illegal gambling, art theft, extortion, and, of course, of having ordered the murder of Benny Siegel. He had been called the Chief of Chiefs of the Mafia, the Brains Behind the Mob, and Public Enemy Number One. The government had succeeded in getting Lansky’s old friend Lucky Luciano deported to Italy. One would suppose the government would have been equally eager to see Lansky shipped to some even farther distant foreign shore, particularly when he wanted to go at his own expense. But, illogically, the United States authorities seemed determined to keep America’s menace firmly in America’s midst.

The trouble was that the federal government had been unable to make any of its plethora of charges against Lansky stick. And so, frustrated, it kept trying.

Everywhere he went he was tailed by federal agents. At his homes in New York and Florida, he had grown accustomed to periodic hammerings

on his front door, and cries of “Open up in the name of the law,” and to greeting officers with subpoenas and summonses and search warrants. His homes had been ransacked so often that he was resigned to it. When he traveled, he was routinely frisked and searched at airports. When he tried to take a holiday in Acapulco, federal agents followed him there, invaded his hotel suite, searched it, and even cut out the linings of his suitcases looking for contraband. Everywhere, his telephone lines were tapped, his conversations taped, so that for any important telephone call he had to use a pay booth. During one airport search, agents, rummaging through his luggage, came upon a bottle of white pills in his toilet kit. Triumphant, they shouted, “Drugs!” It turned out to be medication his doctor had prescribed for stomach ulcers, which Lansky had certainly earned in his career. Lansky always tried to be pleasant and cooperative during these intrusions, but his daily life had become something of an ordeal, and that had taken its toll on both his patience and his health.

Also, needless to say, defending the various actions that his government kept pressing against him kept his lawyers busy and kept Lansky paying hefty legal fees. But then his income was considerable, and his books would demonstrate that most of it came from perfectly legal shares of ownership in various Las Vegas casinos and hotels. In addition to the Flamingo, Lansky had interests in nearly every establishment on the celebrated Strip, including the Desert Inn, the Sands, the Stardust, and the Fremont. Yet why, he would complain, would each new legitimate venture of someone like himself invariably be described as an “infiltration”—as though the act of going legitimate were, in his case, somehow subversive.

As for whatever didn’t show up on Lansky’s books, that information was securely locked in the well-guarded repository that was Meyer Lansky’s brain. Without the key to that, all efforts to find evidence of wrongdoing were futile.

Income tax evasion, of course, had been the undoing of many another criminal. It would be the downfall of Mickey Cohen, who would be sentenced to fifteen years at Alcatraz for that offense—causing Cohen to complain that all his troubles had begun when he *started* paying taxes, which was the first signal to the government that he had any income at all. Lansky, however, had always paid his large taxes scrupulously, on the large income he reported. If there was additional income that he was not

reporting, the government simply could not find it, and it was a matter of guesswork. The government suspected large amounts of unreported income, but had not been able to come up with a shred of proof.

Furthermore, despite the Master Criminal reputation that now followed him wherever he went, Meyer Lansky had been convicted of a wrongdoing only once. This had occurred in 1953, when Lansky was arrested for operating an illegal gambling casino at the Arrowhead Inn outside Saratoga Springs. He pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to ninety days in jail—a minor charge and a minor punishment. After serving sixty days, he was released for good behavior. Later, Lansky would tell his three co-biographers, Dennis Eisenberg, Uri Dan, and Eli Landau, that he blamed that arrest on “bad timing.” There had been gambling establishments throughout the Adirondacks—Lansky was a part owner of at least one other besides the Arrowhead Inn—and they were popular tourist attractions. But the Kefauver Committee had just completed its report on organized crime, and, said Lansky, “I’m sure the reason why the cops in Saratoga suddenly took action was that Governor Dewey ordered an investigation because of the Kefauver Report.” That one offense remained—and remains today—the extent of Meyer Lansky’s criminal record.

Of course one reason why it was difficult to pin anything on Meyer Lansky may have had something to do with his physical appearance and personality. The trim, diminutive fellow just didn’t match anyone’s mental picture of a master felon. He didn’t sport loud neckties, flashy jewelry, white-on-white shirts, and pin-striped suits with wide lapels. In appearance he looked no more dangerous or threatening than anyone’s family dentist. In manner, he was kindly, grandfatherly. (Mickey Cohen was given to frequent bursts of temper and foul language, and his smashed-nosed face looked as though it had been designed for a post office WANTED poster.) Most people who met him immediately liked him, including the FBI men who were assigned to follow him and who occasionally, if somewhat shamefacedly, let him buy them drinks or take them out to dinner at restaurants where Lansky, a generous but not extravagant tipper, was always a favored customer. At Imperial House in Miami Beach, where Lansky and his wife had a large and comfortable but not ostentatious condominium, the Lanskys were considered ideal neighbors. In fact, his presence in the building gave the other tenants an added sense of security.

One neighbor, who knew him slightly, recalls him as “a perfectly *darling* little man.” Public Enemy Number One had no noticeable vices. He didn’t drink, though he did chain-smoke. He was a faithful husband, a devoted father to his three children. He loved animals, and curbed his dog, a tiny Shih Tzu, whenever he walked it, with the usual FBI men a few respectful paces behind, waiting to catch him in some felonious act.

His personal life was almost entirely free from scandal. When, in one Bureau report, Lansky’s daughter Sandra was described as “a divorcee of doubtful reputation resident New York City,” Lansky was outraged. It was true that his daughter was divorced, he protested, and of course he had been saddened by that, but that did not make her reputation “doubtful.” Sandra was a law-abiding housewife, a fine, upstanding Jewish woman. The closest thing to scandal to touch the Lanskys’ lives was the murder, in 1977, of one of his stepsons, Richard Schwartz, who was shot in his car behind a restaurant he owned in Florida. Schwartz had been about to stand trial for the alleged murder of a young man named Craig Teriaca four months earlier when the two, in a barroom argument over who was going to pay the check, became violent and Schwartz pulled out a gun and shot Teriaca in the chest.

The press, making much of the Jewish and Italian names, called Schwartz’s murder a gangland-style revenge murder, and Teriaca’s father was said to be a Mafia member. This may have been true, but Lansky had another explanation. “You see, Richard had been drinking too much. He was really an alcoholic—and carrying a gun when you’re drinking is crazy, never mind that his was licensed. Several months before he died he had started swinging his gun around a lot. I think it went off accidentally and killed the man he was drinking with. Richard had four children—one of them spent two years in a kibbutz in Israel, by the way. I’m sure his death wasn’t vengeance by the Mafia. It was probably suicide, a straightforward family tragedy.”

By 1970, meanwhile, Lansky had begun to weary of the constant surveillance under which the government was keeping him. He was sixty-eight years old, his heart had been giving him a bit of trouble, and there was the recurring problem of his stomach ulcers. Over the years, he had been very generous to Israel—not only with personal contributions, but also by regularly turning over his Las Vegas hotels and casinos for Bonds for Israel rallies. Israel continued to offer itself as a land of refuge to Jews of any

nationality. Lansky's grandparents were buried there. There, he decided, he and his wife would go to live out their twilight years in peace. Though the United States government was still fruitlessly pressing a number of different charges against him, Lansky had begun to fear that his luck might be running out. He had become convinced that, if he remained in the United States, the FBI would find some way or other to get him behind bars. He had begun to see himself, rightly or wrongly, as a victim of anti-Semitism—and it was true that a number of FBI reports on his activities had mentioned him as part of “the Jewish element” in organized crime. Lansky applied for, and received, an Israeli tourist visa, and flew with his wife to Tel Aviv, where he planned to apply for Israeli citizenship. His visa was good for two years.

Lansky spent his two tourist years in Israel pulling every string, using every contact and connection he could muster to try to gain his citizenship. He even had a friend who was on good terms with Golda Meir take his case directly to the prime minister. Mrs. Meir was sympathetic, and agreed that the one gambling charge for which Lansky had been convicted was definitely minor. But she refused to commit herself. The original blanket invitation to all Jews had been given a bothersome amendment in 1950 to bar any Jewish “undesirable.” It was in this category that the FBI insisted that the Israelis place Lansky in order that he could be returned to the United States to face the various indictments it had waiting for him.

In the end, according to his biographers, Lansky became a bargaining chip in an international power maneuver that was being played out between Israel and the United States. The Six Day War was over, but Russia had begun selling missiles to the Egyptians, and Mrs. Meir was worried about an arms buildup in the Sinai. France, meanwhile, had declined to sell Israel any more of the Mirage jets that had been so helpful in the war. But a deal was about to be struck with Washington whereby Israel could purchase a number of 1140-E Phantom fighter-bombers. So determined was the FBI to have Meyer Lansky back within its jurisdiction, incredible though it seemed, that part of Washington's price for the planes was the return of Meyer Lansky. Israel was advised that if it gave Lansky asylum, the planes might not be forthcoming. And Golda Meir wanted her fighter planes more than she wanted to help Meyer Lansky.

In November, 1972, a few days before his visa would expire, Lansky realized that his cause was hopeless. If Israel did not want him, he decided, he would leave the country voluntarily. Armed with a clutch of airplane tickets and entry visas to a number of South American countries that he hoped might take him in, he headed for the Tel Aviv airport. He had no sooner passed through Passport Control, however, than he was joined by FBI agents, who followed him on a zigzag journey halfway around the globe—to Geneva, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Paraguay—where, at each stop, he was denied entry despite his valid documents. His last hope was Panama, for which he also had a visa. Alas, he was denied entry to Panama. The FBI had done its advance work well. The next stop was Miami.

The irony was that, during the decade that followed, in none of the cases that the government had arrayed against him was the government able to obtain a conviction. Millions of dollars of American taxpayers' money were spent, only to have case after case dismissed for insufficient evidence. And so, in the end, officially declared innocent of all his crimes, Lansky was allowed to live out his life in retirement at Imperial House, forbidden to leave the country, his passport revoked, forbidden to go to Israel—the man who may have been the most successful criminal in American history sentenced to life imprisonment in Miami Beach. At the time of his forced return, Lansky was both bitter and philosophical. “That’s life,” he told reporters. “At my age, it’s too late to worry. What will be will be. A Jew has a slim chance in the world.” He died in Miami in January, 1983, at eighty-one.

Asked once what he considered his greatest feat, Lansky did not mention his bootlegging millions, his contributions to Israel and its war of independence, or even his extraordinary ability to stay out of federal prisons. He did not mention his knack, in a business where lives were often cut off exceptionally early, of staying alive until a ripe old age. Nor did he mention his son, the West Point graduate, or his daughter, the suburban matron, or his law-abiding grandchildren. Rather, he felt that his most significant contribution had been in striking blows against social anti-Semitism in America. “Bugsy and I could never stand hypocrisy,” he told his biographers. “People would come to our casinos and gamble and then go back to Washington or New York and make pious speeches about how immoral gambling was. But they didn’t make speeches about something I

think was a lot worse. When we started out, most of Florida and many resorts in other parts of the country were out of bounds to Jews. Before the Second World War, Jews were forbidden to step inside some hotels and casinos and apartment houses. Our casinos were pleasant places and open to everybody. Jews, Christians, Arabs, anybody could come and gamble.”

Seated in the blue-and-white living room of the Imperial House apartment overlooking Miami Beach, Meyer Lansky’s widow, whom everyone in the building affectionately calls Teddy, reminisces about her husband. Still petite and pretty in her mid-seventies, she sits surrounded by a collection of Lalique and Steuben crystal objects, a particular enthusiasm of hers. Books on Lalique glass adorn the glass-topped coffee table. Teddy Lansky thinks, perhaps understandably, that her late husband was much misunderstood by the public, much maligned by the press. “Most of what they wrote about him was fiction,” she tells her visitor, “including how rich he was. Hundreds of millions! What hat do they pull figures like that out of? One of his troubles was that he handed out money to anybody who asked. Oh, I suppose my life with Meyer may have seemed difficult, but it wasn’t difficult for me because I loved the man. Once, when I was coming back from Europe, a lady reporter from I think CBS stuck a microphone in my face and asked me how it felt to be the Godmother. I’m afraid I did a very unladylike thing.”

Teddy Lansky shows her visitor her ultramodern kitchen. One of her hobbies is cooking, and friends have urged her to write a cookbook. When her son was living, she and her daughter-in-law used to do all the baking for the restaurant, called The Inside, that Richard Schwartz ran, and Mrs. Lansky still contributes baked goods to this establishment. Another hobby is horticulture, and the apartment also houses many lush, tropical plants. “Still, people come to me and want to talk about Murder Incorporated,” she says. “That was another invention of the media. One reason why the government couldn’t make any of its cases against him stick was that he told the truth. In one case, I was called as a witness, and the government lost the case simply because I told the truth.” She produces a photograph of her late husband, taken when he was in his fifties, and says, “Tell me what you see in this face.” Then she answers herself. “Character. Strength of character. Integrity. He wasn’t a great talker, but he had a dry, quiet wit. He

was the kind of man who could be in a room full of people, with everybody talking, and Meyer would say something, and everybody would stop talking, just to hear what he had to say. You could hear a pin drop. Yes, he was a small man—small in stature. But he was also a *big* man—big in every other sense. Was he bitter about the way the government treated him? Never! It was all political, you know. He understood that, and he forgave.”

Of Mr. Sam Bronfman’s four children, “the artistic one” was the younger of his two daughters, Phyllis. She had graduated from Vassar, where she had majored in history, and been briefly married to a suave European-born financier named Jean Lambert. But by the early 1950s, while her older sister, the Baroness de Gunzburg, was busily carving a place for herself in Paris high society, Phyllis Bronfman Lambert was a reclusive divorcée living in a modest Left Bank atelier and studying painting and sculpture. Minda de Gunzburg had become a regular at the showings of French couturiers, but Phyllis’s uniform was a pair of carpenter’s bib-topped coveralls and scuffed sneakers. Her father fretted that she was turning into a wealthy, expatriated beatnik.

In 1954, to give her something to do as much as for any other reason, her father sent Phyllis an architectural rendering of a new Seagram’s world headquarters building he planned to erect on property he had acquired at 375 Park Avenue, opposite New York’s elite Racquet and Tennis Club, and asked her what she thought of the drawings.

Phyllis leaped to the bait. She thought the design for the new building was atrocious, and she dashed off a lengthy critique to her father explaining just why she thought so. Impressed, her father put her in charge of the new building’s design, and for the next three years Phyllis had a full-time job.

She researched contemporary architects, visited their studios, interviewed them, studied their models and sketches, and explored their buildings. She consulted with museum heads and city planning experts, poured through volumes of architectural books and magazines. She signed up for courses at the Yale School of Architecture. In the end, she decided that only one man must design her father’s new office building—the master himself, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Van der Rohe agreed, and was given free rein with the forty-one-million-dollar project. Mr. Sam offered only one injunction, which was to “make this building the crowning glory of your life as well as

mine.” A slight hitch was encountered when it was discovered that the celebrated Mies, then at the peak of his career at sixty-eight, had no license to practice architecture in New York State. He had been completely self-taught, had not even attended high school, but in order to obtain the necessary building permits the architect had to be licensed, and in order to obtain a license Ludwig Mies van der Rohe would have to take a state-administered test, like an ordinary civil servant. Huffily, the great man refused to comply with this demeaning bureaucratic condition. But the problem was solved—by Phyllis—by having the New York architect Philip Johnson named as Mies’s collaborator.

When the bronze and glass Seagram tower opened its doors in 1957, it was hailed by art and architecture critics all over the world as not only the crowning glory of Mies van der Rohe’s career but as the crowning glory of New York City and perhaps one of the most strikingly beautiful office buildings in the world. Lavish—even wasteful, economically—in its generosity of outside space, the building is set back from a huge public plaza of marble and pink granite, made inviting by a brace of fountained reflecting pools. Through most of its main floor, which a less generous designer would have given over to shops and other commercial space, runs the spectacular block-long Four Seasons restaurant. There were even unexpected design benefits. Again, with Phyllis supervising the interior details—including the furniture—the windows of the restaurant facing the street and plaza were strung with thousands of yards of bronze and gold watch chains, looping festoons to give the effect of Austrian shades. When the air-circulating system was turned on, it was discovered that this caused the tiers of chains to shiver and shimmer in perpetual movement, an effect that was as delightful within the restaurant as it was to passersby outside. “This building,” declared Edgar Bronfman proudly—he had that year been named president of Joseph E. Seagram and Sons—“is our greatest piece of advertising and public relations. It establishes us once and for all, right around the world, as people who are solid and care about quality.”

Well, yes, in a sense that was so, though Edgar Bronfman still seemed to be brushing at the spiderwebs of raffishness and scandal that had clung to the family and its business since the old days of Prohibition and bootlegging. There were some who might have argued that there seemed to be something in the Bronfman family temperament that kept giving the

family unwanted headlines, and with each new one some diligent reporter would hark back to the unsolved murder of Paul Matoff in 1922. In 1965, for example, Phyllis Lambert's ex-husband's partners were involved in a complex variety of deals that culminated with the seventy-five-million-dollar bankruptcy of the Atlantic Acceptance Corporation, which Jean Lambert had helped organize. By then, he and Phyllis had been divorced for more than a decade, and Lambert himself was absolved of any involvement in the debacle, but it was a fact that Lambert's seed money in his enterprises had been a million-dollar loan from his men wife.

There were also events in Edgar Bronfman's life that a purist would probably not regard as the acts of the kind of "solid people" Edgar aspired to be. Like his father, Edgar Bronfman seemed to have a quick temper and to wear more than a small chip on his shoulder. At Williams College, where he had enrolled with the class of 1950, Edgar had started out as an attractive and well-liked freshman, and most of his classmates were unaware—since Edgar appeared to have very little spending money—that his family was wealthy. In fact, to earn extra pin money, Edgar worked as a caddy at a Williamstown golf course. The impression of him changed drastically, however, when his parents arrived on the campus to take their son home for the Christmas holidays—in a chauffeur-driven Rolls with a footman, and a mink lap robe spread out on the backseat. Thereafter, the bar at Edgar's Delta Phi fraternity house was generously supplied with Seagram products, courtesy of Mr. Sam.

No one knew exactly what caused Edgar's blowup in his junior year in 1949. There was a rumor at the time that one of his fraternity brothers had made an anti-Semitic remark (unlikely, since Delta Phi was a predominantly Jewish fraternity), or a comment to the effect that "we only took you in because your father gives us booze." In any case, Edgar responded by going on a late-night motorcycle spree, not only through the surrounding countryside but also through the rooms of the fraternity house, causing considerable damage and otherwise disturbing the quietude of the New England college town. The next morning, he was asked to leave. Mr. Sam tried to intercede by calling on James A. Linen, then the publisher of *Time* and a Williams trustee. Linen's intervention saved Edgar from official expulsion, but it was agreed that he would continue his education at McGill University, where he was given a degree in 1951. Some years later, his \$3.5

million gift to Williams of its Bronfman Science Center was taken as his peace offering to the school.

By the early 1970s, Edgar's marriage to the former Ann Loeb was in difficulties. But since his college escapade, with the exception of one or two defiant gestures, Edgar had remained very much under his father's thumb. When the possibility of a divorce was brought up, his father would not hear of it. He had set his dynastic hopes on Edgar. Edgar and Ann Bronfman had produced five handsome children, four of them sons. Besides, one divorce in the family was enough. "I've set it up much better than the Rothschilds," Sam once said. "They spread the children. I've kept them together." By this he meant that he had kept the money, and the power, of the family firmly in his own direct line. His brothers, and their children, were permitted only the leftovers.

But the patriarch was growing old, and he was ill and losing his grip. By 1970, even he knew that he was dying of cancer. He died in the summer of 1971—unknighted, still an outsider to both the U.S. and Canadian social establishments he had spent his life trying to join.

The mantle fell upon Edgar, then forty-two. He responded by almost immediately kicking up his heels in ways not usually associated with "people who are solid." But then, no doubt he felt that he had earned his stripes, and now that he was his own boss, had the right to exercise the perquisites that went with heading a great family business.

His first priorities were personal, however. He immediately took steps to divorce his wife, and the marriage was terminated in 1973. Soon after that, his name was sensationally in the newspapers. He was engaged to marry a beautiful, blond twenty-eight-year-old titled Englishwoman, Lady Carolyn Townshend. Lady Carolyn was described as a descendant of Viscount Townshend of Raynham, who introduced scientific fanning to England in 1730 by feeding his cattle turnips during winter months, which had earned him the sobriquet "Turnip Townshend." Lady Carolyn had been married, and divorced, once before, and she and Edgar had known each other since 1968, when she had gone to work in Seagram's London offices.

Edgar's premarital settlement on Her Ladyship, who explained that she liked financial security, was generous, and well publicized. She would receive \$1,000,000 in cash; the deed to Edgar's country estate in Westchester County would be placed in her name; she was allowed to select

\$115,000 worth of jewelry; and she was to be given—in addition to all expenses of running a household—an allowance of \$4,000 a month as personal pocket money to spend as she chose. A lavish wedding took place in December of 1973 at the Saint Regis Hotel in New York. But the aftermath was considerably less cheerful, according to court testimony that followed soon afterward.

On their wedding night, Lady Carolyn banished Edgar to his Manhattan apartment, and refused to join him on their nuptial bed. This situation continued, according to Edgar, during their honeymoon in Acapulco. Thus rebuffed, Edgar took Lady Carolyn to court to break the premarital agreement. The testimony was spicy, to say the least. In Acapulco, declared Lady Carolyn, Edgar had spoken bluntly of his desires, which Lady Carolyn did not consider a very gentlemanly or romantic approach. “I told Edgar he was not being very affectionate with me,” she testified. Edgar denied this, and in turn testified that his bride “had a hangup about sex after the marriage”—adding that she had shown no such sexual inhibitions during the courtship period. The impression grew that Lady Carolyn had lost interest in sex as soon as the prenuptial agreement had been signed. In the end, the court took Edgar’s side, and Lady Carolyn was ordered to return the million, the deed, and the jewels. Edgar agreed to alimony of forty thousand dollars a year for eleven years. Naturally, there were some people who expressed surprise that the young president of Seagram’s would go to court to air his sex life in such a public way but, as Edgar explained it, “I hate to be taken.”

The next Bronfman sensation occurred barely a year later, in the summer of 1975. His twenty-three-year-old son, Samuel Bronfman II, left the family’s Westchester estate one evening to visit friends and a few hours later telephoned the family butler to say, “Call my father. I’ve been kidnapped!” For the next few days, the Bronfman estate was the storm center of frantic comings and goings of police cars, helicopters, and FBI agents, while hundreds of newspaper reporters set up camp outside the gates. At length, a ransom demand was received—for 4.5 million dollars in twenty-dollar bills, the largest ransom ever asked in American kidnapping history. Raising the money, Edgar Bronfman announced, would be no problem. The problem was logistical, since that much money in small bills would fill fourteen ordinary-sized suitcases. Presently, the ransom demand

was cut in half, to 2.3 million, and on an August night Edgar handed this amount, stuffed into two large garbage bags, to a solitary figure near New York's Queensborough Bridge who quickly drove off with the money. The next day, tipped off by a limousine driver named Dominic Byrne, who had been a part of the scheme but who had got cold feet, police found young Sam, bound and blindfolded, in the Brooklyn apartment of a fireman named Mel Patrick Lynch. The youth was unharmed.

In the lengthy trial that followed, the story grew more lurid and bizarre. Lynch claimed that he had first met young Bronfman in a gay bar in Manhattan, and that the two had become homosexual lovers. Together, with an assist from Byrne, they had cooked up the kidnapping scheme as a means of extracting money from young Sam's father. Young Sam hotly denied this, and claimed that he had spent his days in Lynch's apartment lashed to a chair with rope, unable to move, and in terror of his life. But the story began to seem less than likely when a juror asked to examine the rope with which Sam, a strapping six foot three, had been bound. When the juror picked up the rope, it fell apart in several places. Why hadn't Sam, who had been left alone for several periods, been able to wriggle free? Then there was the puzzling matter of the tape-recorded message that had come from young Sam to his father, imploring Edgar to pay the ransom as quickly as possible. At the end of this entreaty, the youth was heard to turn to his captors and say, in a normal tone of voice, "Hold it, I'll do it again." In the end, the jury acquitted both Lynch and Byrne of kidnapping, but found them guilty of the lesser charge of attempted extortion.

Immediately after the trial, Edgar and young Sam held an angry press conference in the Seagram Building, during which they defended young Sam's honor, his heterosexuality, his lack of a motive—he had all the money in the world already, young Sam pointed out—and condemned everyone connected with the trial: the judge, the jury, the police, the FBI, and, for good measure, the press itself.

Three days later, the Bronfman kidnapping story ended with a touch of soap opera—the gala wedding, in Westchester, of Edgar Bronfman to Miss Georgiana Eileen Webb. Like the previous Mrs. Bronfman, she was younger than her husband—just two years older than young Sam—and English, though her background was somewhat different from that of Lady Carolyn Townshend. Her father ran a pub in Finchfield, northeast of

London, where the bride had worked as a barmaid. The pub was called Ye Olde Nosebag, and the press had a good time with “liquor baron weds barmaid” stories. The new Mrs. Bronfman announced her intention of converting to Judaism to please her husband. Meanwhile, someone had come up with the discovery that old Mr. Sam Bronfman’s estate in Tarrytown had been sold to, and converted into the American headquarters of, the Reverend Sun Myung Moon.

Not long afterward, young Sam Bronfman himself was married to a Jewish girl named Melanie Mann.

While the Bronfman family’s private lives were taking on something of an air of a three-ring circus, Edgar Bronfman was also demonstrating an ability to make headlines in the financial pages. He had always been more than a little stage-struck and, in the 1960s—against his father’s wishes—he had joined forces with producer Stuart Ostrow to form Sagittarius Productions, which had as some of its more conspicuous hits the musicals *1776*, *The Apple Tree*, and *Pippin*, along with some better-forgotten failures. Then, in 1967, Edgar decided to buy Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—another decision his father strongly opposed. After Seagram’s had laid out some forty million dollars in the takeover attempt, Mr. Sam nervously called his son aside and said, “Tell me, Edgar, are we buying all this stock in MGM just so you can get laid?” To which Edgar breezily replied, “Oh, no, Pop. It doesn’t cost forty million dollars to get laid.” Though Edgar briefly succeeded in getting on the MGM board, the takeover eventually failed, and how much the company lost in the process has never been revealed, though the financial press placed the figure in the neighborhood of ten million dollars.

By 1981 Mr. Sam Bronfman was dead, and that was the year Edgar decided to take another giant plunge, and placed himself at the center of one of the great corporate takeover battles of that year. Seagram’s, it seemed, found itself with the embarrassing sum of 3.7 *billion* dollars lying about and waiting to be invested. The target Edgar decided to go after was the smallish but very lucrative oil company known as Conoco. Another giant corporation that also had its eye on Conoco was DuPont of Delaware. In the battle of giants that ensued, Seagram bought twenty-seven percent of

Conoco's stock before being outmaneuvered by DuPont. But the fight ended in more or less a draw, and Edgar was not altogether unhappy with the outcome. Nor were Seagram's losses what they had been in the case of MGM. With the conversion of Conoco to DuPont stock that followed the acquisition, Seagram wound up owning twenty percent of DuPont—more than any single member of the du Pont family,* and enough to send Edgar Bronfman sailing onto DuPont's board of directors.

Today, Edgar Bronfman continues to swim upstream in the riskiest financial waters, taking his wins and his losses with the same almost brash élan. Like his father, who once quipped that mankind's greatest invention was not the wheel, but interest, Edgar is the author of the oft-quoted monetary epigram: "To turn a hundred dollars into a hundred and ten dollars is work. To turn a hundred million into a hundred and ten million is inevitable." Thus the rich get richer. At the time of the Conoco fight, with all that Seagram money burning holes in his pockets, he told a reporter he had asked himself, "What would my father do?" Then he promptly answered his own question with, "Hell, he never had three-point-seven billion!"

*Which does not capitalize the *d* as the company does.

FROM POLAND TO POLO

Though they seemed blessed—or cursed, depending on how one looked at it—with extraordinary longevity, the founding Russian-Jewish moguls, the men who, as they said, had made it from Poland to polo in one generation, were going one by one. In January, 1973, Adolph Zukor sat in a suite at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles waiting to go downstairs to join the gala dinner party that Paramount Pictures was tossing to honor the founder's one hundredth birthday. No expense had been spared for the party—for such items as seventy crates of rose petals, thirty gross of balloons, and a fourteen-foot-high birthday cake made, appropriately enough, of frosting-coated plywood.

Understandably, in the months of preparation and planning that had gone into the event—making sure that such people as Jack Benny and Mary Livingstone, Anne Baxter, Liv Ullmann, Jimmy Stewart, Barbara Stanwyck, and Bette Davis would all be there—there had been some apprehension on the part of Paramount's board of directors that the elderly honoree might not make it to his own centennial. And, upstairs in his suite, Mr. Zukor was cross. Though he moved slowly, he was able to move about—to make it unaided from his car, two or three times a week, into the card room of the Hillcrest Country Club, where, though he himself no longer played, he liked to watch his friends play bridge and gently kibitz from time to time. His health was fine, he insisted. But now, in their precautionary state, the men who ran his company were insisting that he make his entrance onto the stage in a wheelchair, like an invalid. Furthermore, lest he become overexcited, his entrance was to be delayed until the moment when the huge cake would be rolled in. Zukor was being required to watch the

rest of the festive proceedings on a closed-circuit television screen. Furious, he watched as his guests sipped cocktails and otherwise disported themselves in the ballroom below. Finally, Adolph Zukor would have no more of it. Banging his cane on the floor he cried, “God damn it, if I’m supposed to be the star of this show I’m not going to spend all my time waiting in the wings! *Take me down!*” He was taken down. He died four years later, at a hundred and four.

Meanwhile, a whole new Russian-Jewish generation was moving up to fill the shoes, and eventually eclipse the accomplishments, of the oldsters. Brash and young, ambitious and daring and willing to try for the long shot, not all these new entrepreneurs were heirs to great family fortunes like Edgar Bronfman. Some were starting, just as their predecessors had, from scratch, with nothing more than a bright idea and a gambler’s nerve. Once again, assimilation was the goal, and, as the older generation had found, assimilation seemed to involve financial success first, and then, it was hoped, some degree of social acceptance by the American establishment. But, once again with this younger generation, assimilation would prove to be a double-edged sword, involving, as it did, the emotional choice of how much Jewishness to retain and how much to abandon on one’s journey of upward mobility. Sometimes, in order to assimilate into a new culture or new economic stratum it is necessary to totally deny the old, and in the process, something precious may be lost—a sense of who one really is, or where one came from. To assimilate, after all, means to make oneself similar, to adapt, to blend in, to assume the tone and style and coloration of one’s surroundings. But what are the limits of assimilation? At what point does the assimilationist become the apostate? At what point does the assimilationist say good-bye, for instance, to his grandparents or even to his parents? These are questions that many young and successful American Jews of Russian descent would find it difficult to answer in the 1970s.

Ralph Lauren, for example, would much rather talk about his considerable success as a designer than whether he is, or is not, Jewish. “I’m so sick of being described as a poor little Jewish boy from the Bronx who’s made good,” he says. “Yes, I was born in the Bronx—but in the nice part, the west Bronx, the Mosholu Parkway section, near Riverdale, and I had a wonderful childhood. My parents weren’t rich, but they weren’t poor

either.” His father was a painter who specialized in *faux bois* and *faux marbre* work, and did an occasional industrial mural. “And I’m sick of hearing about how I changed my name. The name was Lifschitz. Do you know what it’s like growing up as a kid in New York with a name like that? It has ‘shit’ in it. And *I* didn’t change the name. My older brother suggested the change when I was sixteen. We all changed. Still,” he adds, “I’m told that the name Lifschitz is a very distinguished name in Russia.”*

After graduating from City College, where he majored in business, a major he hated—“My mother wanted me to be a doctor or a lawyer or at least an accountant”—he worked as a clerk in various New York stores, including Brooks Brothers, where he was able to buy classically styled clothes at a discount.

Meanwhile, as the youngest of three boys in the family, Ralph Lauren was often given hand-me-down clothes to wear. Though these outfits were sometimes out of style, Lauren learned to make the most of this fact. An old belted Norfolk jacket, for instance, could, with an upturned collar and the addition of a jaunty scarf, be made to look snappy and debonair. Pleated slacks might have become passé, but with the right belt, shoes, shirt, and other accessories, the young Ralph Lauren—with his close-cropped dark hair, his blue eyes, perfect teeth, and lithe build—could make them look both sporty and sexy. Girls, in particular, began to tell him they liked the way he dressed because he looked “different.” All this was in the late 1950s. While his contemporaries were wearing leather jackets, driving motorcycles, and listening to rock music, Lauren was embracing an earlier tradition—that of the 1920s, and *The Great Gatsby*, and the Ivy League look. He was already, like Helena Rubinstein a generation earlier, proving himself a clever adapter—a master of juxtaposition and pastiche, taking old styles from the American past and from English country and hunting fashions, and giving them new flair.

His first job with a manufacturer was with Beau Brummel Ties, which made inexpensive snap-on bow ties. Lauren, whose fashion idols were such vintage movie stars as Fred Astaire, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and Cary Grant, along with such public figures as John Lodge, John F. Kennedy, and the Duke of Windsor, asked Beau Brummel if they would let him experiment with marketing wide neckties, such as the Duke of Windsor had made famous. Beau Brummel agreed, and Lauren and his brother Jerry sat up late

one night at the kitchen table tossing around ideas for names. “We wanted something that sounded tweedy, sporty, elegant, English, expensive,” Lauren says. The choice of names began to narrow down to those of upper-crust sports. Cricket, rugby, fox hunting, and quail shooting were considered and rejected. Finally, Jerry Lauren suggested polo, the most upper-crust, expensive, exclusive international sport in the world. At first, the sales of Ralph Lauren’s Polo line of neckties were poor. Narrow neckties were the fashion then, and his were a full four inches wide. In his secondhand Morgan sports car—with a wide leather strap across its bonnet in the manner of the old MG—Lauren toiled about the North Shore of Long Island with his ties in a suitcase, trying to convince shop owners that these were the ties Jay Gatsby would have worn. Then Bloomingdale’s hove into view with a small order. The Polo ties were no sooner displayed than they were snapped up.

Ralph Lauren is the first to admit that, at the time, the four-inch-wide ties did not look quite right with the then-prevailing fashions in men’s wear. “I saw that you needed shirts and suits to go with the ties,” he says. But he was also not really a designer. His drawing ability was amateurish at best. He knew nothing about the sizing of garments. He could not sew, and could not even pin up a hem. He needed someone to execute his ideas. But Beau Brummel, a conservative, old-fashioned firm, was reluctant to branch out into anything beyond neckwear. And so, in 1969, still working out of a drawer—“not an office, a drawer”—in New York’s garment district, Lauren approached Norman Hilton, an established men’s-wear manufacturer, with the idea of producing a full line of men’s clothing under the Polo label. Hilton responded by offering Lauren fifty thousand dollars’ worth of credit and a partnership in the business.

The parting with Beau Brummel was friendly, and Ned Brower, the company’s president, cheerfully let Lauren take the Polo name with him, along with a small inventory of neckties. Today, of course, Ned Brower looks back on his 1969 generosity with a certain amount of rue. “Given hindsight, considering what’s happened since,” he says, “I wish I’d asked for five percent of the action. Still, if I’d kept the name and lost the man behind it, it might not have been the same.”

What happened, according to Ralph Lauren, “is that I got the chance to do my own look. No one had ever done a whole line of men’s wear before

me, there were no men's designers in the United States before me." And when, in 1973, Ralph Lauren launched his line of clothes for women, he became the first designer to go from men's wear into women's wear, and not the other way around. Other popular men's-wear designers—Pierre Cardin, Bill Blass, Oleg Cassini, Calvin Klein, Yves St. Laurent, and Hardy Amies—started out designing clothes for the opposite sex.

The rapid rise from itinerant tie peddler to his current preeminent position on the fashion scene was not without its bumpy passages for Lauren. Theoni V. Aldredge, for example, is a well-known costume designer for the Broadway stage and films. When it was announced that she would be designing the clothes for the 1973 remake of the film *The Great Gatsby*, starring Robert Redford, Lauren's star was just beginning to rise, but the movie seemed a natural for him. He telephoned Miss Aldredge and asked for an appointment. They met, she admired his clothes, and he was given the assignment of turning out the men's clothes for the movie, including Jay Gatsby's famous pink suit. Miss Aldredge says, "I did *all* the designs, selected *all* the colors and fabrics. I got a full-frame credit as costume designer, and an Academy Award to prove it. Ralph Lauren got a much smaller credit—'Men's clothes executed by....' There's a big difference between designing and executing someone else's designs." The trouble was that the film was one of those in which the clothes got more critical praise than the actors' performances. According to Miss Aldredge, Ralph Lauren tried to capitalize on this by claiming that he had "created the Gatsby look." So much publicity to this effect began appearing in the press that Miss Aldredge had to complain bitterly to Paramount and Lauren to get them to stop it.

Nor has Ralph Lauren's climb to huge success been without emotional rough spots. Both he and his wife, Ricky—whom he met when she was working as a receptionist for his eye doctor—insist that they are total perfectionists. When they acquired their vast Fifth Avenue duplex with its commanding view of Central Park and the reservoir, Ralph Lauren confessed to a friend that he "practically wound up in a hospital with a nervous breakdown," because of his inability to come up with a design solution for so much space. At length, the interior designer Angelo Donghia was brought in, and the result is starkly minimalist, all white, mirrored, with glass and chrome furniture, many banana trees, and empty spaces. "The

apartment seems all wrong for them,” says another friend. “Perhaps because they’re both quite small, they seem lost in it, like aliens from another planet. They argue over which oversize white sofa they ought to sit in. But they try very hard. When *Architectural Digest* was photographing the apartment, Ralph made Ricky change her clothes—as though what she was wearing was all wrong. I’ve never seen two people trying to lead such *relentlessly* perfect lives.”

Meanwhile, what started as a suitcase enterprise has expanded, in barely a decade’s time, to include complete lines of men’s and women’s clothes and shoes, boys’ wear and girls’ wear, lines called Western Wear and Rough Wear, luggage and small leather goods, men’s and women’s fragrances and cosmetics, and home furnishings—sheets, towels, pillowcases, and even glassware. Franchised are some twenty-two Polo by Ralph Lauren retail stores across the country, concentrated in such wealthy watering places as Carmel, Beverly Hills, and Palm Beach, and more are on the drawing boards. This sudden Lauren empire has provided Ralph and Ricky Lauren and their three children with, in addition to the extraordinary apartment, a getaway house in the Hamptons—“East Hampton, the best Hampton,” Lauren points out; a winter retreat in Round Hill, Jamaica, that formerly belonged to Treasury Secretary Douglas Dillon; a sprawling horse and cattle ranch in southwestern Colorado, which Lauren admits he has no idea what to do with; and a private jet to carry the Laurens between these places.

One wonders what Lauren’s Russian-born parents, who emigrated to the United States after the revolution, think of what has become of little Ralphie Lifschitz who used to play stoop-ball and stickball in the Bronx. But despite repeated efforts on the part of journalists to find an answer to this question, Ralph Lauren’s parents remain an area of his life that he is reluctant to discuss.

Of course one could argue that Ralph Lauren, at forty-four, has not yet had time to grow into, and adjust to, the role of business tycoon. And though there was perhaps not that much difference between Lauren peddling neckties in a secondhand car in the 1960s and David Sarnoff peddling newspapers in a converted packing crate in 1900, David Sarnoff had become by the 1960s a suave and self-assured paterfamilias of the radio and telecommunications industry, had ripened to his position. His personal

trademarks had become the heavy gold watch chain draped across his ample front, the large cigar in the ivory holder that was invariably clenched between two plump fingers, and in his lapel, one or another of the ribbons and decorations he had been awarded by American and foreign governments, including those he had received as a brigadier general in World War II, when he had served as General Eisenhower's chief of communications. In the process, he had also developed an enormous ego.

As he moved toward the end of his life, he had begun to think of it as a kind of parable, or Aesopian fable, in which every event had a neat moral attached at the end. There was the strange story, for example, of the mysterious woman who had handed him two hundred dollars to buy his first newsstand. The tale had its payoff, many years later, when Sarnoff himself had become a philanthropist, when dozens of colleges and universities had bestowed honorary degrees in the arts and sciences on him, and New York's Stuyvesant High School had presented him with an honorary diploma to make up for the one he had never earned. One evening Sarnoff was attending a Jewish philanthropic gathering, and suddenly "found himself staring at a sweet-faced, gray-haired woman, evidently a social worker." He recognized her as his benefactress from Monroe Street.

She explained how it had all come about. At the time, she had been a secretary "to a wealthy, big-hearted man who wanted to help people anonymously." She had been dispatched to the Lower East Side to seek out worthy recipients. Sarnoff's name had been supplied to her by none other than school superintendent Julia Richman, who had been impressed by young Sarnoff's spunky stand against the English teacher who had inveighed against the "Jewish traits" of Shylock. Typically, when he told this tale, Sarnoff never supplied a name for either the "social worker/secretary" or her "big-hearted" employer, but the moral was clear: he who stands firm against bigotry will reap spiritual and material rewards.

Nor, in his role of moralist—or perhaps fabulist—did he forsake his role as prophet. In 1958, he told *Wisdom* magazine what he foresaw for the year 1978, which he himself would not live to reach. Among other things, he predicted the effective harnessing of solar energy; global, full-color television; automation (including men working only two hours a day and robots taking over nine million clerical tasks); the "farming of oceans for nutritive products"; a life span "within hailing distance of the century

mark”; the end of the Soviet republic and the Communist hierarchy; universal communications and speedy transportation shrinking the whole world into a neighborhood; the outlawing of war as an instrument of international policy; and, above all, “as a reaction against current cynicism and materialism, there will be an upsurge of spiritual vitality.”

But Sarnoff the visionary also remained to the very end Sarnoff the canny businessman. In 1965, when Bennett Cerf and Donald Klopfer, the heads of Random House publishers, wanted to sell their company, Sarnoff decided that Random House, which had published such distinguished authors as William Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren, and George Bernard Shaw, would be an elegant capstone to RCA’s communications empire. Naturally, he wanted to acquire this little gem for as little money as possible.

His first offer was half a share of RCA stock for each share of Random House. This was rejected by Cerf as too low. Sarnoff soon came back with another offer—three-fifths of a share of RCA stock for each Random share, a sixty percent offer instead of fifty, and a considerable increase. But this still did not satisfy Cerf and Klopfer, who asked for sixty-two one-hundredths of a share instead of sixty one-hundredths. Two one-hundredths of a share might not have seemed much to haggle over, but in money it amounted to more than a million dollars.

Negotiations remained at a standoff for several weeks. Then a High Noon confrontation was scheduled at Sarnoff’s town house on East Seventy-first Street for a Sunday in December. Cerf arrived for the meeting to find Sarnoff’s wife watching a boring and unimportant football game on NBC. Cerf reminded her that the good game that afternoon was on CBS. “I don’t watch CBS,” Lizette Sarnoff replied loyally, and then, remembering Bennett Cerf’s long affiliation with the rival network, added, “The only thing I watch on CBS is *What’s My Line?*”

Then the two businessmen got down to the matter at hand. Sarnoff was adamant. Sixty percent was as high as he would go. Cerf was equally firm. Sixty-*two* percent was as *low* as he would go, and, Cerf added, since things seemed to have reached a stalemate, they might as well forget the deal and sit back and enjoy the game. Sarnoff paced the room, silently fuming. Finally he exploded.

“You may not realize it, Bennett,” he shouted, “but you’re dealing with a very arrogant and egotistical man!”

Cerf replied calmly, “General, I’m just as arrogant and egotistical as you are. Let’s watch the game.”

“We had better talk tomorrow,” said Sarnoff, to which Cerf replied that there was really no point in further discussion, and besides, he was leaving the next day for California and a holiday.

Sarnoff was flabbergasted, and said, “You mean to say that with this deal hanging fire, you’re going to go off on vacation?”

Cerf reminded him that there was *no* deal hanging fire, since he had already rejected Sarnoff’s final offer.

There followed several weeks of silence from the board chairman of RCA, during which Cerf began seriously to wonder if he had overplayed his hand and, in the process, lost a sale that would have amounted to some forty million dollars. But a few weeks, it seemed, was the face- and ego-saving period required of Sarnoff before he could capitulate. In the end, Sarnoff came back, grumbling that Cerf was being very difficult, and offering him, as a magnanimous gesture, what Cerf had been asking for all along—sixty-two percent.

Using the royal first-person plural, Sarnoff said loftily, “We’re not going to argue with you over that two one-hundredths of a share.”

Ego—it could almost take the place of a religion. Since it was not possible, or even theologically appropriate, to attribute to the Deity the bountiful good fortunes that had fallen upon the shoulders of these Eastern European immigrants, what remained to celebrate was the Self. One could not even credit ancestors, or the importance of good genes, when one looked back at one’s life and saw the awesomeness of everything that had happened. The ancestors, in nearly every case, had been poor, not arrogant, for more generations than anyone could count, and lay in unknown weedy graveyards with their Hebrew inscriptions tipped askew above their heads, in places whose names were no longer on any map. Who else could the self-made man worship but himself? “A very arrogant and egotistical man....” The closest things to religious holidays became the anniversaries of the self—the birthdays, the wedding commemorations, the funerals.

For Mr. Sam Bronfman’s funeral in 1971, Jewish tradition was abandoned altogether. Judaism treats death as a very private affair, frowns on pomp and oratory, and particularly opposes the public displaying of the

remains of the deceased. But Mr. Sam lay in state, in a silver shroud and an open coffin, in the center of the great rotunda of the Montreal headquarters of the Canadian Jewish Congress. At the funeral services, eulogy followed eulogy from prominent laymen, in defiance of Jewish custom, which dictates a simple homily delivered by a rabbi. The Seagram executives who had planned the ceremony also saw to it that the mourners included as many Christian leaders as possible from both Canadian and U.S. business, political, and academic communities, the irony being that many of these men and women had snubbed him all his life.

In California, Frances Goldwyn had given lavish birthday parties for her husband for nearly fifty years, and the big house at 1200 Laurel Lane had been the scene of many other grand entertainments. Winston Churchill had dined there, as had President and Mrs. John F. Kennedy, not to mention the movie royalty—Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, Gloria Swanson, George Cukor, Katherine Hepburn, Spencer Tracy, and on and on. But by the late summer of 1973, the manicured croquet court at the foot of the sloping lawn lay empty and the house was strangely silent. The only sounds were the periodic beeps of the electronic surveillance system that patrolled the grounds, and the whispered comings and goings of the round-the-clock nurses and doctors who attended the ninety- (or, more likely, ninety-three-) year-old man who lay in an upstairs bedroom, incontinent and uncomprehending: Sam Goldwyn. He had been unable to attend—and had probably not been aware of—the hundredth birthday party of his onetime partner Adolph Zukor, earlier that year. He had lain this way for more than five years.

Downstairs, Frances Goldwyn, greeting a few friends who had dropped in for a brief call, tried to put as cheerful a face on things as possible. “Oh, we have our little excitements,” she said. “We try, on most nice days, to wheel him out onto the upstairs deck for a little fresh air and sunshine. The other day, when the nurses weren’t looking, he toppled out of his wheelchair and cut himself. Oh, yes, there’s always something going on. He wouldn’t be Sam if there weren’t.” Some months before, President Nixon had come to the house to present Sam Goldwyn with an achievement medal. It had been possible to get the old producer dressed and photographed with the President, receiving the medal. There were even occasional flashes of the old fire, brief moments of lucidity when the old

man would seem to realize what was going on—and there were even touches of humor in these. Richard Zanuck had come for a visit, and Goldwyn had suddenly begun berating him for making “a piece of filth like *Hello, Dolly!*” Bemused, Zanuck replied that while he did indeed plan to produce *Hello, Dolly!*, filming had not yet begun, and why should Sam describe a light-hearted musical as “a piece of filth”? Sam was insistent—*Hello, Dolly!*, he said, was “cheap pornography.” Finally, Zanuck thought he saw a connection, and said, “Sam, are you talking about *Valley of the Dolls?*” And Sam, true to his wife’s observation that, though you could be right, he *could not* be wrong, snapped back, “That’s right—*Hello, Valley of the Dollies.*”

In 1972, when Charlie Chaplin had ended his twenty-year self-exile from America, and returned to Hollywood to receive a special Oscar from the motion picture academy, he was then eighty-three and aged into near senility himself. His picture had appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, and a copy of the paper happened to be lying beside the bedridden Sam Goldwyn’s bed. Suddenly Goldwyn noticed it, sat up, and said hoarsely, “Is that Charlie? Is that Charlie?” Then, collapsing back into his pillow, he muttered, “He looks terrible.”

For years, during the golden era, Sam and Frances Goldwyn had represented one of the most durable partnerships in Hollywood, a town not known for long and stable marriages. He, she often said, made “all the lordly decisions, and I see to it that all the bits and pieces are in good order.” With uncharacteristic modesty, Sam declared that this was too limited an appraisal of her role. “I’d be lost without Frances,” he said. “She’s the only real, close partner I’ve ever had.” It was true that she was one of the few people in Hollywood with whom he was able to get along. But the later years had not been easy. In 1969, after experiencing a series of circulatory ailments, Goldwyn named his wife to take over the operation of his studio and the management of his personal fortune, estimated then at twenty million dollars. A court order in Los Angeles approved a petition naming Frances Goldwyn as her husband’s conservator and placed Samuel Goldwyn Productions in her hands—none of which pleased the couple’s only son, Sam Jr. An eventual accord was reached. But from then on, relations between mother and son were strained.

“Shall we go up and see him?” Frances Goldwyn suddenly suggested to her visitor. They mounted the curved staircase together and entered Sam Goldwyn’s dimly lighted bedroom. He lay—a huge man, grown obese from lack of exercise—hands folded on his stomach, gaze fixed on some indefinite space, flanked by life-sustaining apparatus. “It’s me, Sam,” said Frances. There was no visible response.

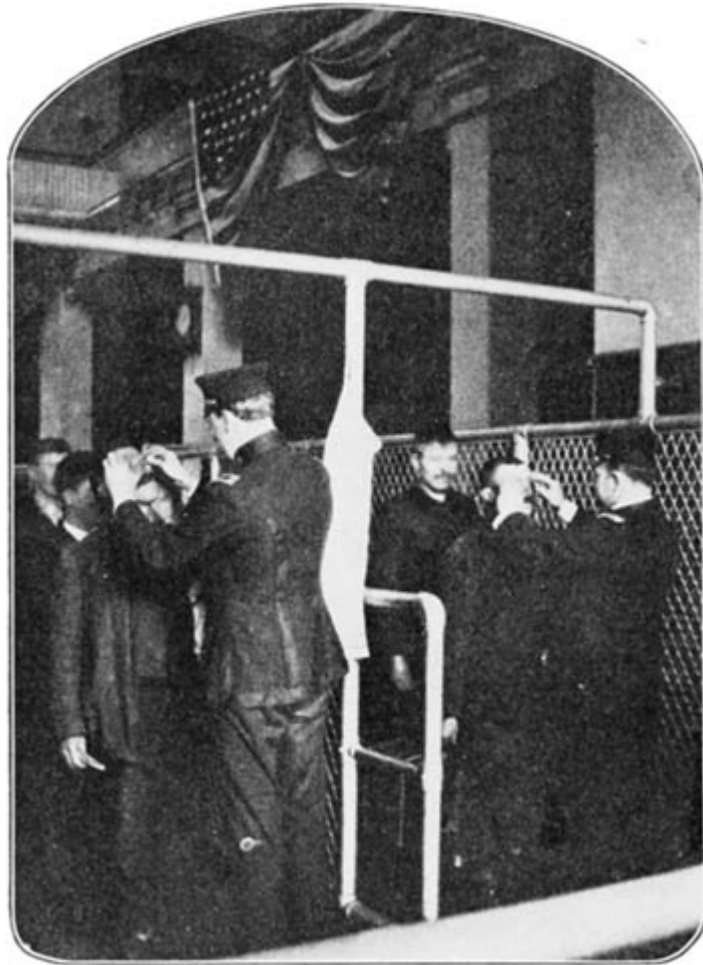
Later, sipping one of her special martinis that she would allow no one else to fix—a special proportion of gin and water that only she understood—she said, “The doctors say that his heart is as strong as a twenty-year-old boy’s. Of course I think it’s mostly guts and pride that’s keeping him alive. This could go on for years and years.” Then, turning her back to be unzipped, Frances Goldwyn prepared to go upstairs again, change into a robe, and have her supper on a tray beside her silent husband.

It did not go on for years and years. Within the year, Sam Goldwyn died in his sleep. Friends who had hoped that Frances would now be able to enjoy some well-earned freedom and travel were shocked when, not long after her husband’s death, she had a heart attack. Now it was she who lay speechless and immobilized in the upstairs room with nurses around the clock, able to communicate only by writing notes on slips of paper. She died two years later, in the summer of 1976, at seventy-three.

Not long before her death, she had said to a friend, “Just think—more than thirty million dollars in the estate! He had a lot to be proud of. I always thought that everything we had was owed to Mr. Giannini’s bank!”

*Lauren has not been altogether consistent in explaining the name change. Not long after telling this writer that his older brother changed it, he told a reporter for the *New York Times Magazine* (issue of September 18, 1983, page 112) that their father was responsible for the change.

Image Gallery



Immigrants arriving at Ellis Island. The eye examination for trachoma was much feared.



“Gibson Girl” shirtwaists, the fashion rage of the early 1900s.



SAMUEL GOLDFISH
General Manager and Treasurer
Jesse Lasky Feature Film Co.

Sam Goldwyn.



The second generation: Edgar Miles Bronfman, to whom his father's mantle has been passed.



Benny "Bugsy" Siegel.

Acknowledgments

This book has been in various stages of preparation of more years than I care to count, and the list of individuals who have contributed thoughts and impressions to it is long. But there are a few people to whom I would like to extend a special word of thanks.

For their recollections of the great, gone motion picture moguls of Hollywood, I am grateful for the hours I was able to spend with George Cukor, King Vidor, Adolph Zukor, Minna Wallis, Roddy McDowall, Lucille Ball, Sam Marx, Ava Gardner, John Huston, Gail and Howard Strickling, Lillian Hellman, Elizabeth Taylor, and, most particularly, Frances Howard Goldwyn.

In New York, one of the few remaining people to have a tenuous impression of the sad-fated Rose Pastor Stokes was Mrs. Lettice Sands Stokes. I am also grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Roth, Sr., who supplied me with the unpublished memoir of Mr. Roth's father, Emery Roth, which is herein quoted. Other New Yorkers who deserve thanks are Mrs. Anna Potok, Jack Rosenthal, John Schiff, the late Walter E. Sachs, Robert La Vine, Ralph and Ricky Lauren, Peter Carlsen, John L. Loeb, Jr., Ruth Proskauer Smith, Patrick O'Higgins, Theoni V. Aldredge, Dina Abramovicz of YIVO, and the particularly helpful Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel of Temple Emanu-El.

A special word of thanks to Phillip Applebaum of Detroit. Although I have had personal and business dealings with members of the Bronfman family over the years, I am indebted to longtime Bronfman observer Peter C. Newman of Toronto, who was generous with insights and whose book *Bronfman Dynasty* (published in the United States as *King of the Castle*) was an important source. This book also owes much to Allen and Beverley Gasner of Bethesda, Maryland; to Robert and Helen Gould of Cincinnati; to Isaac and Dian Levine, also of Cincinnati, for their recollections of Dr.

Levine's father, Calman Levine; to Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk of Hebrew Union College; to Mrs. Meyer Lansky of Miami Beach; and to Dr. Edward Lahniers, for psychological insights. In the process of its preparation, the book was fortunate to be taken into the hands of two splendid editors at Little, Brown: my late friend Harry Sions, and the superb Genevieve Young. I would also like to thank Kate Bourne of Little, Brown for many hours of diligent and thorough picture research. As always, I am indebted to my friend and agent, Carol Brandt, for her cool guidance and support of the project from the beginning. While all of these people have helped enormously with the book, I alone must be held responsible for any errors or shortcomings.

S.B.

Source Notes

PREFACE

- x-xiii Figures on Christian and Jewish wealth: *Jewish Living*, vol. 2, no. 3 (Sept./Oct., 1979), pp. 41–47; reprinted in Siegel and Rheins, pp. 98–103.
- xii Mr. Annenberg’s fine: Siegel and Rheins, p. 59.
- xiii Lansky’s worth: *Jewish Living*, p. 47; reprinted in Siegel and Rheins, p. 103.
- xiii Mayer’s worth: Howard Strickling to author.

1. UPTOWN FIREBRAND

- 4 Jewish migration figures: Liebmann Hersch, “International Migration of the Jews,” *International Migrations*, vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1931), pp. 490, 496, 501, 504, 507.
- 4–5 The Adenoids Riot: *New York Tribune*, June 28, 1906; reprinted in Schoener, p. 132.
- 5 “excitable, ignorant Jews ... nearest ‘Yiddisher’”: *ibid.*
- 7 “Julia, I’m pretty ... will know my name”: memorial pamphlet by Addie Richman Altman and Bertha Richman Proskauer; privately printed; no date.
- 7–8 “Julia, take everything off”: *ibid.*
- 8 “But we can’t do anything”: *ibid.*
- 10 “It is much easier”: *ibid.*

- 10 “Every time she visits”: *Jewish Daily Forward*, Feb. 12, 1911.
- 11 “years of”: Altman and Proskauer pamphlet.
- 14 “the dominion of reason”: Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk to author.
- 15 Population figures: Howe, p. xix; *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia and Reader’s Guide* (New York: KTAV Publishing, 1944), vol. 7, p. 547.
- 16 Population figures: Oscar Handlin, *Adventure in Freedom* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), p. 84.
- 18 Population figures: Report of the U.S. Immigration Commission, vol. 15, 1911, pp. 476–477.
- 20 “Rent money and landlord”: Applebaum, p. 10.
- 20 Baron de Hirsch fund: Manners, p. 193.
- 22 Schiff’s contribution: *ibid.*, p. 97.
- 23–24 “peace, liberty ... Occidental Civilization”: Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel to author.
- 24 “Are we waiting”: *ibid.*
- 24 “thoroughly acclimated American Jew”: *ibid.*
- 25–26 The 1907 syllabus: Howe, p. 276.
- 26 Jewish school population: *ibid.*, p. 274.
- 26 “thirst for knowledge ... debatable questions”: *ibid.*, p. 276.
- 28 Pushcart licenses: Manners, p. 239.
- 28 “You don’t want to be too hard”: *ibid.*, p. 240.
- 29 “It is not astonishing”: Theodore A. Bingham, “Foreign Criminals in New York,” *North American Review*, Sept., 1908, pp. 383–394; quoted in Howe, p. 133.
- 29 *Harper’s Weekly* article: issue of Nov., 1907.
- 30 “sensational methods”: Manners, p. 243.
- 30–31 “a Jacob Schiff” and other *Tageblatt* quotes: Manners, pp. 244, 241–242.
- 31 “Dear Mr. Editor”: *Jewish Daily Forward*, Feb. 8, 1906; reprinted in Schoener, p. 247.

32 “In the old country”: Dr. Isaac Levine to author.

2. WHY THEY CAME

33–35 Gelbfisz’s boyhood and emigration: Frances Howard Goldwyn (Mrs. Samuel) to author.

37 “The purpose in educating”: Lucy Dawidowicz, *The Golden Tradition: Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 30.

38 Jews arrested or exiled: Howe, pp. 6–7.

39 The cossacks at the station: Lyons, p. 24.

41 Harris Rubin’s story: *American Jewish Archives*, vol. 33, no. 1 (Apr., 1981), pp. 10–11.

42 “a sweeping plague”: *New York Times*, Jan. 29, 1905; reprinted in Schoener, p. 28.

43–46 Isaac Don Levine’s impressions: “Letters of an Immigrant,” *American Jewish Archives*, vol. 33, no. 1 (Apr., 1981), pp. 53–61.

46 immigration figures: Oscar Handlin. *Adventure in Freedom* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), p. 84; also *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1957), vol. 15, p. 466

47 *oyesen*: *Jewish Daily Forward*, July 14, 1903.

47 Vacations “have become a trend”: *ibid.*, June 30, 1904.

48 “God sent us the Victrola”: *ibid.*, May 9, 1904.

48 “There are pianos”: *ibid.*, Oct. 16, 1904.

3. A JEWISH CINDERELLA

54 “Some pray to marry”: John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 13th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1955), p. 906.

55 Rose’s aphorisms: *Tageblatt*, Aug. 13, 1903, Oct. 25, 1905.

56 “Mr. Stokes is a deep, strong thinker”: quoted in *New York Times*,

- Apr. 6, 1905.
- 57 “If I thought as much”: *ibid.*
- 57 “love at first sight”: *ibid.*
- 58 Stokes telegram exchange: Cleveland Amory, *The Last Resorts* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), p. 16.
- 58 “a descendant of families”: *New York Times*, Apr. 6, 1905.
- 59 “She might have been the model”: Lillian Baynes Griffin, “Mrs. J. G. Phelps Stokes at Home,” *Harper’s Bazar*, Sept., 1906.
- 60 “I wish the Times would correct”: *New York Times*, Apr. 6, 1905.
- 60 “inspired religion ... teacher and guide”: Griffin in *Harper’s Bazar*, Sept., 1906.
- 60 “The only difference”: *ibid.*
- 61 “As she talks”: *New York Times*, Apr. 6, 1905.
- 61 “very interesting”: *ibid.*
- 61 “It was a hard struggle”: *ibid.*
- 62 “If our life”: Griffin in *Harper’s Bazar*, Sept., 1906.
- 63 “we have no definite plans”: *New York Times*, July 20, 1905.
- 64 *Hebrew Standard* editorial: reported in *ibid.*
- 64–65 “closer to the Christian sentiment”: *Hebrew Standard*, July 21, 1905.
- 65 “Fame!”: Rose Harriet Pastor, *Tageblatt*, July 26, 1903.
- 65–66 Description of Stokes apartment and interview with Rose: Griffin in *Harper’s Bazar*, Sept., 1906.
- 69 “For the future”: *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia and Reader’s Guide* (New York: KTAV Publishing, 1944), vol. 10, p. 67.
- 70 production of shirtwaists: Howe, p. 298.
- 71 “I am a working girl”: *ibid.*
- 71 “If I turn traitor”: Barbara Mayer Wertheimer, *We Were There: The Story of Working Women in America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), p. 301.
- 72 “The girls”: McAlister Coleman, “All of Which I Saw,”

- Progressive*, May, 1950, p. 25.
- 72 “You are on strike”: Howe, p. 299.
- 73 “A common social and cultural background”: Will Herberg in *American Jewish Year Book* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1940), p. 36.
- 75 “to make room”: memorial pamphlet by Addie Richman Altman and Bertha Richman Proskauer; privately printed; no date.
- 75 “[The fire] taught”: Julia Richman and Isabel Wallach, *Good Citizenship* (New York: American Book Company, 1908), p. 76.
- 75 “The desire to save money”: *ibid.*, p. 93.
- 75–76 “worse ... than slovenly”: *ibid.*, p. 103.

4. AN OCCUPATION FOR GENTLEMEN

- 81 Meyer Lansky’s memories and quote: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, pp. 24–28.
- 82–83 Lansky stories: *ibid.*, pp. 33–38.
- 84–85 Goldwyn’s early years in the United States: Frances Howard Goldwyn (Mrs. Samuel) to author.
- 85–88 Beginning of Goldwyn’s film career, including quotes: *ibid.*
- 89–90 Involvement of Zukor with Goldwyn et al.: Adolph Zukor to author.
- 91 “Adolph didn’t think”: Frances Goldwyn to author.
- 92 Zukor and *Queen Elizabeth*: Adolph Zukor to author.
- 92–93 The Goldwyn-Zukor partnership: *ibid.*
- 93 “If I hadn’t suggested”: Frances Goldwyn to author.
- 93–94 Goldwyn family and business life: *ibid.*
- 95 “I didn’t think”: *ibid.*
- 95 “A self-made man”: *International Celebrity Register* (New York: Celebrity Register Ltd., 1959), p. 297.

5. HEROES AND HEROINES

- 97 “David has all the luck”: Lyons, p. 38.
- 97– Sarnoff’s boyhood: *ibid.*, pp. 29–38, 44.
101
- 102 U.S. Navy and radio: *ibid.*, p. 42.
- 102 “That’s nice”: *ibid.*, p. 56
- 103 Sarnoff joins Marconi: *ibid.*, p. 39
- 104– Sarnoff and the *Titanic*: *ibid.*, pp. 57–60.
105
- 105 “brought radio to the front”: *ibid.*, p. 60.
- 107 “Love—”: Rose Harriet Pastor, *Tageblatt*, July 26, 1903.
- 108 Rose’s homilies: *ibid.*, Aug. 13, 1903.
- 108 “The Anglo-Saxon coldness”: Yeziarska, *Salome*, p. 248.
- 108 “I am a Russian Jewess”: *ibid.*, p. 65.
- 108 “the oriental”: *ibid.*, p. 209.
- 109 “I felt the deep world-sorrow”: Rose Harriet Pastor, *Tageblatt*, Mar. 24, 1903.
- 109 Yeziarska at school: Yeziarska, *Ribbon*, p. 39.
- 110 “A woman alone”: *ibid.*, p. 217.
- 110 “Here I am”: *ibid.*, p. 73.
- 110 Headlines: *ibid.*, p. 40.
- 111 “laughs and a happy ending”: *ibid.*, p. 82.
- 111 “screaming and yelling”: *ibid.*
- 111–12 Yeziarska and Goldwyn: *ibid.*, pp. 72–73.
- 112 Fox offer, including quotes: *ibid.*, pp. 84–87.
- 114 Deportations: James Trager. *The People’s Chronology* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. 791.
- 114– Race riots and strikes: *ibid.*
15

- 117 “So she’s back”: *Kansas City Star*, Mar. 18, 1918.
- 118 “To the Star”: *ibid.*, Mar. 20, 1918.
- 119 “I felt it was a matter”: quoted in transcript, U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, no. 5255: *Rose Pastor Stokes vs. U.S.A.*, in New York Public Library.
- 119– Details of Rose’s indictment, trial, and appeal: *ibid.*
36
- 137 “Life is strange”: quoted in Zosa Szajkowski, *Jews, War and Communism* (New York: KTAV Publishing, 1972), p. 285.
- 138 Vladeck’s embarrassment: Vladeck–Louis Marshall letters, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati.
- 138n. Immigration figures: Yaffe, pp. 8–9.
- 139 “Former Prisoners”: Howe, p. 326.
- 139– Bank closings: *ibid.*, pp. 136–137.
40

6. THE JEWISH LAKE AND OTHER CREATIONS

- 146 “witty and interesting”: Carola Warburg Rothschild to author.
- 146 “They must be Russians”: *ibid.*
- 148 Lansky-Luciano friendship: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, pp. 52–53; Gosch and Hammer, p. 24.
- 148– George Raft’s gangster friendships: *International Celebrity Register* (New York: Celebrity Register Ltd., 1959), p. 606.
49
- 149 Jewish gangsters: Siegel and Rheins, pp. 60–63.
- 152 “If you have a lot”: Gosch and Hammer, p. 35.
- 154 The ambush: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, pp. 108–109.
- 155– Bronfman family background: Newman, pp. 66–73.
56
- 157 “The Langham’s bar”: *ibid.*, p. 69.

- 157 “If they were”: *ibid.*, p. 73.
- 158 “Bolshevism flourishes”: pamphlet, Anti-Saloon League of New York, 1919, in New York Public Library; quoted in Newman, p. 82.
- 158 Recipe and labels: Newman, pp. 84–85.
- 159 “Distilling is a science”: *Leadership* (pamphlet), Seagram Distilling Company, New York, 1972, unpagged.
- 159 Production and profits: Newman, p. 86.
- 159 Lansky-Bronfman relationship: Mrs. Meyer Lansky to author.
- 160 “Rum running has provided”: Newman, p. 87.
- 161 The platform: Samuel Bronfman to author.
- 161– Bronfman marriages: Newman, p. 95.
- 62
- 163 “was bootleggin’ enough whiskey”: Gosch and Hammer, p. 41.
- 163 “the Jewish lake”: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, p. 79.

7. FITTING IN

- 165 “Take the Fisher Freeway”: Phillip Applebaum to author.
- 167 “I was ashamed”: Emery Roth, untitled, unpublished, and undated memoir, supplied by Mrs. Richard Roth, Sr. (Mr. Roth’s daughter-in-law) and quoted with her permission, p. 1.
- 167 “I attended balls”: *ibid.*, p. 10
- 168 “I was rather surprised”: *ibid.*, p. 32.
- 170 “By boat”: O’Higgins, p. 78.
- 171 The uncle in Melbourne: *ibid.*, p. 146.
- 171 “The sun was strong”: Rubinstein, p. 23.
- 171 “My new friends”: *ibid.*, pp. 23–24.
- 172 Crème Valaze: O’Higgins, p. 151.
- 172 “Mlle. Helena”: *ibid.*, p. 152.

- 173 “WHAT WOMEN WANT”: *ibid.*
- 173 “masterful adapter”: Patrick O’Higgins to author.
- 174 “The first thing I noticed”: Rubinstein, pp. 57–58.
- 175n. “It’s made of a wonderful mixture”: O’Higgins, p. 151.
- 176 “a beautiful area”: Howe, p. 132.
- 176 “In certain strata”: *ibid.*, p. 133.
- 177 “enable the social life”: quoted in *New York Times*, Oct. 6, 1982.
- 178–Details of City College: Howe, pp. 280–283.
- 80

8. MINSTRELS AND MINSTRELSY

- 182 Carrie Jacobs Bond story: Woollcott, pp. 130–132.
- 184 Pelham Café: *ibid.*, pp. 40–43, 46.
- 185 Berlin’s musical ability: *ibid.*, pp. 35, 37.
- 185 Prince Louis: *ibid.*, p. 51.
- 186 “about an Italian girl”: Mary Ellin Berlin Barrett to author.
- 186 “I suppose you’ve got a tune”: Woollcott, pp. 71–72.
- 187 Michigan: *ibid.*, p. 77.
- 188 “whattle”: *ibid.*, p. 76.
- 188 Appraisals of Berlin’s music: *International Celebrity Register* (New York: Celebrity Register Ltd., 1959), p. 73.
- 189–Jewish performers: Howe, pp. 556–558; Bermant, pp. 84, 100.
- 90
- 192 Douglas Fairbanks’s Jewish mother: Frances Howard Goldwyn to author.
- 192 Jewish performers who changed their names: Siegel and Rheins, pp. 14–16.

9. HIGH ROLLERS

- 195–Details of Sam Goldwyn’s life and career: Frances Howard
208 Goldwyn (Mrs. Samuel) to author.
- 196 “Is Sunday a legal day?”: *ibid.*
- 199 “the most colossal fake”: *ibid.*
- 200 “And this time for good”: *ibid.*
- 201 “A producer should not be hampered”: *International Celebrity Register* (New York: Celebrity Register Ltd., 1959), p. 297.
- 202 “Mr. Godsol is no longer with us”: *ibid.*
- 202 “because Metro isn’t”: Frances Goldwyn to author.
- 202 “Leo is *my* birth sign”: *ibid.*
- 208 “quality ... clean things can be done”: *ibid.*
- 210–Lansky’s modus operandi: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, pp. 91–92.
11
- 211 Profits: Gosch and Hammer, p. 74.
- 211–Prohibition statistics and arrests: Newman, p. 83.
12
- 212–The numbers game: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, p. 150; Gosch
13 and Hammer, p. 75.
- 213 Laundering money: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, pp. 250–251.
- 213 “It was like we had a printin’ press”: Gosch and Hammer, p. 367.
- 213–Bronfman’s modus operandi: Based on author’s experiences while
14 working in an advertising agency for Seagram’s.
- 214 Bronfman quoted on types of liquor: Samuel Bronfman to author.
- 215 Bronfman’s social climbing: Newman, pp. 24–25.
- 216 “Our company”: *ibid.*, p. 62.
- 218 The second Mrs. Stokes: Lettice Stokes to author.
- 219 “language instructor”: *New York Times*, June 21, 1933.

10. LITTLE CAESARS

- 222 Class change and anxiety: W. H. Auden's introduction to Yeziarska's *Ribbon*, pp. 16, 15.
- 222– Bronfman's temper: author's experience.
23
- 223 "I don't get ulcers": Newman, p. 29.
- 223 "The damn fool": *ibid.*, p. 39.
- 224 "It's expensive!": *ibid.*, p. 40.
- 224 "Mary": *ibid.*, p. 33.
- 224 "I don't want my sister to know": *ibid.*, p. 40n.
- 224 "Interest ... office boy": Samuel Bronfman to author.
- 225 "Imagine the secrets": O'Higgins, p. 50.
- 226 bought the building: *ibid.*, p. 58.
- 226 "Stella's, of course!": *ibid.*, p. 105.
- 227 The Lehman Brothers story: *ibid.*, pp. 93–95.
- 227– The Goldwyn stories, Goldwynisms, and so on: based on author's
33 interviews with Frances Howard Goldwyn, George Cukor, Roddy McDowell, Sam Marx, Ira Gershwin, Lucille Ball, Lillian Hellman, Minna Wallis and others.
- 233 "I have in mind a plan": Lyons, p. 71.
- 235 The Dempsey fight: *ibid.*, pp. 100–101; Dreher, pp. 72–73.
- 236 Corporate jealousies: Lyons, pp. 90–91.
- 236 "on the bridge": *ibid.*, p. 11.
- 236 "birth of the electron": *ibid.*, p. 14.
- 238– "Woe to America!": Yeziarska, *Ribbon*, pp. 216–217.
39

11. DEALS

- 241– Aging whiskey: Newman, p. 133n.
42
- 242 Price of Rossville distillery: *ibid.*, p. 134.
- 243 The naming of Seven Crown: Dr. Isaac Levine (son of Calman Levine) to author.
- 244 “I always like to have money”: *ibid.*
- 244n. “Very Own”: Newman, p. 107n.
- 245 Men of Distinction: *ibid.*, p. 137n.
- 245 Morgenthau and the tax bill: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, p. 80; Newman, p. 64.
- 245– The Rosenstiel stories: Cooney, pp. 225–227.
47
- 247 Bronfman-Rosenstiel partnership: Newman, p. 134.
- 247 Nicknames: Cooney, p. 226; Robert Gould to author.
- 248 Car-playing among industry rivals: Frances Howard Goldwyn to author; similarly, Helen Gould to author.
- 248 Seagram brands displayed: Newman, p. 39.
- 248– The Julius Kessler story: Dr. Isaac Levine to author.
51
- 250 “But you’re an old man”: Newman, p. 157.
- 252 “This is so much bullshit”: *ibid.*, p. 143.
- 252– Rose Stokes’s last days, funeral: *New York Times*, June 21, 1933.
54
- 253– Rose’s memorial service: *ibid.*, July 25, 1933.
54

12. WAR

- 256 Joseph P. Kennedy story: Hecht, p. 520.
- 257 Kennedy and RKO: Lyons, pp. 143–144; Dreher, pp. 111–112.

- 257 “Sarnoff’s grand design”: Lyons, p. 143.
- 257 “A banker?”: Adolph Zukor to author.
- 257– Kennedy stories: Frances Howard Goldwyn (Mrs. Samuel) to
59 author.
- 258 “tough customer”: Samuel Goldwyn files.
- 259 “de-Semitization”: Howe, p. 567.
- 259 “No writers”: Frances Goldwyn to author.
- 259– Hecht’s involvement with Bergson et al.: Hecht, pp. 529, 532, 536.
60
- 260– Jewish army fund-raising: *ibid.*, pp. 538–543; also *New York Times*,
65 Feb. 19, 1983.
- 262 “I called on David”: Hecht, p. 543.
- 262 “accept with pleasure”: Frances Goldwyn to author.
- 264 “We’re here to contribute”: Hecht, p. 543
- 265 “an investigation of propaganda”: *New York Times*, Aug. 19, 1941.
- 266 “The Zionists ... turning in my grave”: Bergson quoted in *New
York Times*, Feb. 19, 1983.
- 268 Impressions of Hillcrest Country Club: author’s.
- 268 “in this business”: Sam Marx to author.
- 270 “You will probably think it strange”: Goldwyn files.
- 270 “Please stop crying”: *ibid.*
- 270– Lansky and Jewish refugees: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, p. 297.
71
- 271 Bronfman’s philanthropy, Newman, p. 46.
- 272– Goldwyn and Danny Kaye: Frances Goldwyn to author.
73
- 273 “In dealing with my husband”: *ibid.*
- 274– “The Vanishing Jew”: Henry Popkin in *Commentary*, July, 1952.
75 pp. 46, 51.
- 275 “This originates not in hate”: *ibid.*, p. 46.

13. AT LAST, A HOMELAND

- 277 Siegel in Hollywood: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, p. 176.
- 277– Plans for Las Vegas: *ibid.*, p. 225.
78
- 279 Cohen’s cleanliness: Cohen, pp. 255–256.
- 279 “not good for anyone’s image”: *ibid.*, p. 1.
- 279 “a three-card Monte dealer”: *ibid.*, p. 234.
- 280 “We were insured”: *ibid.*, p. 45.
- 280 “Knockin’ their own proposition”: Hecht, p. 610.
- 280 “Who the hell is Ben Hecht”: Cohen, p. 89.
- 281 “This guy got me so goddamn excited”: *ibid.*, p. 91.
- 282 “Jewish people”: *ibid.*, p. 93.
- 282 “America is our Zion”: Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk to author.
- 282 “When one has ten million dollars”: Doris Lilly to author.
- 282– Cohen’s party: Cohen, p. 91.
83
- 283 Lansky’s helper on the docks: *ibid.*, pp. 92–93: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, p. 296.
- 284 Cohen’s orders to kill British officers: Cohen, pp. 91–92.
- 285 “To me, he was the greatest man”: *ibid.*, p. 92.
- 285 Figures on Jewish deaths: Siegel and Rheins, p. 153.
- 285 “We had been talking”: Dalia Lamport to author.
- 287– Apfelbaum family history: Anna Potok to author.
89
- 289 “We loved it here”: *ibid.*

14. TOUCHES OF CLASS

- 292 “he’s just a little old movie producer”: Frances Howard Goldwyn (Mrs. Samuel) to author.
- 293 Madame Rubinstein’s nomenclature: Patrick O’Higgins to author.
- 293 Bronfman children’s upbringing: Jack Clifford to author.
- 293 No business outside Canada: Edgar M. Bronfman, “Name Your Brand—In Any Market in the World,” *Columbia Journal of World Business*, vol. 4, no. 6 (Nov./Dec., 1969), p. 31.
- 293 “How long do you think”: Newman, p. 65.
- 293–Mayer’s life-style: Gail and Howard Strickling to author.
95
- 295 Goldwyn’s misspellings: Goldwyn files.
- 295 Goldwyn’s malapropisms: Frances Goldwyn to author.
- 295 “Find out how many stars”: *ibid.*
- 296 “How long have you and I”: Frances Goldwyn to author.
- 297 “A kind of love song”: *ibid.*
- 296n. Parsons’s column: *International Celebrity Register* (New York: Celebrity Register Ltd., 1959), p. 573.
- 297–Gloversville story: *ibid.*
99
- 299–Lansky / Las Vegas story: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, p. 226;
301 Gosch and Hammer, p. 316.
- 302 Siegel / Virginia Hill story: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, pp. 225, 237; Gosch and Hammer, p. 331.
- 302–Siegel, Hill, and the Flamingo: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, pp.
307 226, 235–241; Gosch and Hammer, pp. 316–319, 329–331.
- 303 “the situation”: Gosch and Hammer, p. 315.

15. ALL THAT MONEY CAN BUY

- 312– German opposition to changes at Emanu-El, including quotes:
13 Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel to author.
- 313 The Sidney Weinberg story: Walter E. Sachs to author.
- 314 The Harmonic Club story: Rabbi Sobel to author.
- 314– David Sarnoff’s house: author’s impressions.
16
- 316 “I believe that television”: Lyons, p. 207.
- 317 “Think of your family”: *ibid.*, pp. 207–208.
- 317 “If we let our imagination”: *ibid.*, p. 208.
- 317 RCA Pavilion: *ibid.*, p. 216.
- 318 “Good evening”: *ibid.*, p. 275.
- 319 “Father of American Television”: *ibid.*, p. 268.
- 319 “I don’t think this television thing”: Frances Howard Goldwyn (Mrs. Samuel) to author.
- 321– Five Towns and Woodmere Academy: Beverley and Allen Gasner
24 and Sue Kaufman Barondess to author.
- 322 “a golden ghetto”: Sue Kaufman Barondess to author.
- 322 “Be civil”: Beverley Gasner to author.
- 324 “And your grandfather and I worked so hard”: *ibid.*

16. CROWN PRINCES

- 327– The obituary: *New York Times*, Sept. 1, 1967.
28
- 328– The Calman Levine story: Dr. Isaac Levine (Calman’s son) to
31 author.
- 329 “WE WHO MAKE”: Newman, p. 137.
- 329 The Willkie dispute: Dr. Isaac Levine to author.
- 329 “I am company policy”: *ibid.*

- 330 “*You go to my enemy*”: *ibid.*
- 331 “This call is not welcome”: *ibid.*
- 332 “But Father, don’t you know”: Newman, p. 174.
- 332 “But those Bronfmans”: Mrs. Arthur Lehman to author.
- 332 “the son of that Russian”: Mrs. J. L. Loeb to author.
- 333n. Robert Sarnoff’s prediction: *International Celebrity Register* (New York: Celebrity Register Ltd., 1959), p. 666.
- 334 “Find Marshall”: Newman, p. 28.
- 335 “Sam was sitting”: *ibid.*
- 335 “My God!”: Sam Man to author.
- 336 “See him”: Newman, p. 35.
- 336– Rubinstein will: O’Higgins, pp. 279–280, 288, 293.
- 37
- 337 Bronfman/*Holiday* story: author’s recollection.
- 338 “If you’re saying”: Newman, p. 183.
- 339 “In real estate”: Robert Gould to author.
- 339 “We had a code of ethics”: Cohen, p. 183.
- 340 “Where are they going”: Mrs. Meyer Lansky to author.
- 340– Lansky’s family life: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, pp. 256, 230–
42 231, 284–285.
- 342 “Don’t you know”: *ibid.*, pp. 230–231.

17. WITCH-HUNTING

- 343 “pervasive shaper of American thought”: James Trager, *The People’s Chronology* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. 999.
- 344 Hellman’s income: Siegel and Rheins, p. 447.
- 345 “Let’s take a look”: *ibid.*, p. 449.

- 345 Dalton Trumbo story: Trager, p. 999.
- 346 “always had something to say”: Siegel and Rheins, p. 450.
- 346 Zero Mostel story: *ibid.*, p. 451.
- 346– John Garfield story: *ibid.*, pp. 453–454.
47
- 347– Phillip Loeb story: *ibid.*, pp. 454–457.
48
- 350 “Modern girls are conscious”: *New Yorker*, Aug. 10, 1925.
- 350 “As to being Jewish”: Dorothy Schiff, quoted to author by John Schiff.
- 351 “After all”: Frances Howard Goldwyn to author.
- 352 Lettice Stokes on Rose Pastor Mrs. Stokes to author.

18. PEOPLE WHO ARE SOLID

- 354 “I was born”: Jack Rosenthal to author.
- 354– Lansky’s harassment by U.S. officials: Eisenberg, Dan, and
57 Landau, pp. 284–285.
- 356 “bad tuning ... because of the Kefauver Report”: *ibid.*, p. 288.
- 357 Sandra Lansky story, including quote: *ibid.*, pp. 290–291.
- 357 “You see, Richard had been drinking”: *ibid.*, p. 322.
- 358– Lansky as bargaining chip: *ibid.*, pp. 313–314.
59
- 359 “That’s life”: quoted in *New York Times*. Jan. 16, 1983.
- 360 “Bugsy and I”: Eisenberg, Dan, and Landau, p. 324.
- 360 “Most of what they wrote about him”: Mrs. Meyer Lansky to author.
- 361– Phyllis Bronfman story: Newman, pp. 165–166.
63
- 362 “make this building”: *ibid.*, p. 166.

- 363 “This building”: *ibid.*, p. 167.
- 363 Atlantic Acceptance bankruptcy: *ibid.*, p. 164.
- 364 Edgar’s college escapade: author’s recollection.
- 364 Linen asked to intercede: Newman, p. 159.
- 364 Sam’s opposition to divorce: John L. Loeb, Jr., to author.
- 364 “I’ve set it up”: Newman, p. 21.
- 365 Edgar’s premarital settlement: *ibid.*, p. 189.
- 366 “I told Edgar ... after the marriage”: *ibid.*
- 366 “I hate to be taken”: *ibid.*, p. 190.
- 366– Sam II kidnapping, including quotes: *ibid.*, pp. 190–191.
67
- 368 “Tell me, Edgar”: *ibid.*, p. 187.
- 368 Conoco takeover story: *People*, Dec. 28, 1982–Jan. 4, 1983, pp. 62–63.
- 369 “To turn a hundred dollars”: Newman, p. 19.
- 369 “What would my father”: *People*, Dec. 28, 1982–Jan. 4, 1983, p. 63.

19. FROM POLAND TO POLO

- 371– Adolph Zukor story: Frances Howard Goldwyn (Mrs. Samuel) to
72 author.
- 372 “God damn it”: Robert LaVine to author.
- 373 “I’m so sick”: Ralph Lauren to author.
- 373 “My mother wanted”: *ibid.*
- 374 “We wanted something”: *ibid.*
- 374 “I saw that you needed”: *ibid.*
- 375 “Given hindsight”: Ned Brower to author.
- 375 “I got the chance”: Ralph Lauren to author.

- 375 “I did *all* the designs”: Theoni V. Aldredge to author.
- 376 “practically wound up in a hospital”: Ralph Lauren to author.
- 376 “The apartment seems all wrong”: Peter Carlsen to author.
- 378 “found himself staring”: Lyons, p. 34.
- 378 “to a wealthy, big-hearted man”: *ibid.*
- 378 Sarnoff’s predictions: *Wisdom*, Sept., 1958.
- 378– Random House story: Cerf, pp. 286–287.
79
- 379 “I don’t watch CBS”: *ibid.*, p. 286.
- 379 “You may not realize ... off on vacation”: *ibid.*, p. 287.
- 380 “We’re not going to argue”: *ibid.* p. 287.
- 380 Bronfman funeral: Newman, p. 151.
- 380– Goldwyn’s last years: author’s impressions.
83
- 381 “Oh, we have”: Frances Goldwyn to author.
- 381– The Goldwyn-Zanuck exchange: *ibid.*
82
- 382 Goldwyn on Chaplin: *ibid.*
- 382 “I’d be lost”: *ibid.*
- 382– “The doctors say”: *ibid.*
83
- 383 “Just think”: *ibid.*

Selected Bibliography

- Applebaum, Phillip. *The Fischers: A Family Portrait*. Detroit: Harlo Press, 1982.
- Bermant, Chaim. *The Jews*. New York: Times Books, 1977.
- Cerf, Bennett. *At Random*. New York: Random House, 1977.
- Cohen, Mickey. *Mickey Cohen: In My Own Words*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975.
- Cooney, John. *The Annenbergs*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.
- Dreher, Carl. *Sarnoff: An American Success*. New York: Quadrangle, 1977.
- Eisenberg, Dennis, Uri Dan, and Eli Landau. *Meyer Lansky: Mogul of the Mob*. New York: Paddington Press, 1979.
- Fishman, William J. *Jewish Radicals*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1974.
- Gosch, Martin A., and Richard Hammer. *The Last Testament of Lucky Luciano*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1975.
- Hecht, Ben. *A Child of the Century*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954.
- Howe, Irving. *World of Our Fathers*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976.
- Lyons, Eugene. *David Sarnoff*. New York: Harper and Row, 1966.
- Manners, Ande. *Poor Cousins*. New York: Coward McCann and Geoghegan, 1972.
- Newman, Peter C. *Bronfman Dynasty*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978.*
- O'Higgins, Patrick. *Madame*. New York: Viking Press, 1971.
- Rubinstein, Helena. *My Life for Beauty*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965.
- Schoener, Allon, ed. *Portal to America: The Lower East Side, 1870–1925*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967.

Siegel, Richard, and Carl Rheins. *The Jewish Almanac*. New York: Bantam Books, 1980.

Woollcott, Alexander. *The Story of Irving Berlin*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925.

Yaffe, James. *The American Jews*. New York: Random House, 1968.

Yeziarska, Anzia. *Salome of the Tenements*. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1923.

———. *Red Ribbon on a White Horse*. New York: Scribner, 1950.

*Published in the United States under the title *King of the Castle*, in somewhat different form, by Pocket Books, 1979.

Index

- Adams, C. M., [122](#)
Adenoids Riot, [4](#), [11](#), [24](#)
Aldredge, Theoni V., [375–76](#)
Alexander II of Russia, [37](#)
Alexander III of Russia, [37](#)
Allgemeiner Jiddisher Arbeiter Bund, [38](#)
Altman, Addie Richman, [12](#)
Altman family, [15](#)
Amboy Dukes, The, [274](#)
Ameche, Don, [278](#)
America First Committee, [265–66](#)
American Hebrew, [24](#)
American Jewish Year Book, [73](#)
Anastasia, Albert, [283](#)
Andrews, Lincoln C., [212](#)
Annenberg, Leonore Cohn, [246–47](#)
Annenberg, Moses L., [xii](#)
Annenberg, Walter, [xii](#), [246–47](#)
anti-Semitism, [275](#), [339–40](#), [343](#)
 in *Dearborn Independent*, [138](#)
 among Jews, [12](#), [14–15](#), [20–21](#), [22](#), [23–24](#), [313–14](#), [350–51](#)
 Lindbergh speech, [265](#)
 Nazis, [258–67](#), [270–72](#)
 of other ethnic groups, [77–78](#)
 in Poland, [80–81](#)
 in Russia, [36–38](#)
 at West Point, [341](#)
Apfelbaum, Maximilian, [287–88](#)

Apple Tree, The, 368
Arden, Elizabeth, 225
Arlen, Harold, 188
Arrowsmith, 208
Astor, John Jacob, 104
Astor, Vincent, 104, 106
Astor, Mrs. William, 12, 15
Atherton, Gertrude, 111, 197
Auden, W. H., 222
Avedon, Richard, 32

Bacall, Lauren, 32
Baline, Isidore. *See* Berlin, Irving
Bankhead, Tallulah, 197
Banky, Vilma, 195–96
Bara, Theda (Theodosia Goodman), 189, 192
Baron de Hirsch Fund, 20
Barondess, Joseph, 70
Baxter, Anne, 371
Beach, Rex, 197
Begin, Menachem, 259, 281
Belasco, David, 86
Belfrage, Cedric, 254
Bell, Alexander Graham, 317
Belmont, Alva (Mrs. Oliver H. P.), 13, 59, 71
Ben-Gurion, David, 281, 286
Bennett, Arnold, 176
Bennett, James Gordon, 100–01
Benny, Jack (Benjamin Kubelsky), 189, 192, 371
Berg, Gertrude, 347
Bergson, Peter, 259, 260, 263, 264, 266, 280
Berkman, Alexander, 3, 114, 129
Berlin, Ellin Mackay, 349–50
Berlin, Irving (Isidore Baline), 189, 190, 272
 childhood of, 182–83
 early career of, 183–87

marriage of, [349–50](#)
music of, [187–88](#)
reasons for success of, [190–91](#)

Bern, Paul, [111](#)
Bernhardt, Sarah, [92](#)
Best Years of Our Lives, The, [296–97](#)
Beverly Hills Supper Club (Newport, KY), [212](#)
Bilsky, Lucy. *See* Bronfman, Lucy
Bingham, Theodore, [28–30](#)
Birth of a Nation, [88](#)
blacklist, [344–49](#)
Blaustein, Jacob, [xiii](#)
Blaustein, Louis, [xii–xiii](#)
Bond, Carrie Jacobs, [182](#)
Bonnard, Pierre, [174](#)
bootlegging, [151–55](#), [162](#), [210–12](#), [293](#)
Borscht Belt, [48](#), [80](#), [191](#), [192](#), [272](#)
Brandeis, Louis, [259](#)
Brice, Fanny (Fanny Borach), [176](#), [189](#), [190](#), [191](#), [192](#)
Brinkley, David, [351](#)
Bronfman, Abe, [155](#), [156](#)
Bronfman, Allan, [156](#), [161](#), [215](#), [223](#), [271](#)
Bronfman, Ann Margaret Loeb, [332](#), [364–65](#)
Bronfman, Bessie, [156](#)
Bronfman, Edgar, [250](#), [293](#), [332](#), [337–338](#), [363–69](#)
Bronfman, Ekiel, [155](#), [156–57](#)
Bronfman, Georgiana Eileen Webb, [367](#)
Bronfman, Harry, [155](#), [156](#)
Bronfman, Jean. *See* Matoff, Jean Bronfman
Bronfman, Laura, [155](#)
Bronfman, Lucy Bilsky, [161](#)
Bronfman, Melanie Mann, [367](#)
Bronfman, Minda. *See* Gunzburg, Minda Bronfman de
Bronfman, Minnie, [155](#)
Bronfman, Phyllis. *See* Lambert, Phyllis Bronfman
Bronfman, Rose. *See* Rady, Rose Bronfman

Bronfman, Saidye Rosner, 161–62, 215, 224, 250
Bronfman, Samuel, 32, 268
 childhood of, 156–57
 as executive, 222–24, 333–38
 family of, 155–57, 293, 331–32, 337–38, 361–69
 funeral of, 380
 trip to Israel of, 354
 Meyer Lansky and, 155, 159–63, 210
 in liquor business, 157–63, 210, 213–16, 222–24, 241–52, 293, 328–31, 333–38
 marriage of, 161–62, 215, 224, 250
 personality of, 215, 222–24
 philanthropy of, 271, 354
 Lewis Rosenstiel and, 245–48
 Seagram’s Seven Crown and, 243–44, 331
 Seagram tower and, 361–62
 social aspirations of, 214–15, 216, 328–29, 331–32
 son Edgar and, 337–38, 364–65
Bronfman, Samuel, II, 366–67
Bronfman Dynasty, 334–36
Bronx, NY, 140, 176–78, 320
Bronx Tabloid, 177
Brower, Ned, 375
Buchalter, Louis “Lepke,” 149
Burns, George (Nathan Birnbaum), 189
Butter and Egg Man, 274
Byrne, Dominic, 366, 367

Cahan, Abraham, 99
Campbell, Ralph B., 122–24
Cantor, Eddie (Isidor Iskowitch), 32, 176, 189, 190, 192, 231
Cantor, Ida, 231
Carnegie, Andrew, xi
Carpathia, 106
Carpentier, Georges, 234, 235
Castle Garden, 21

Catherine II of Russia, [35–36](#)
Catskill resorts, [47–48](#)
 see also Borscht Belt
Cedarhurst, NY, [321](#), [323](#)
Century Country Club (New York City), [313–14](#)
Cerf, Bennett, [378–80](#)
Chancellor, John, [351](#)
Chaplin, Charlie, [262–63](#), [382](#)
Child of the Century, A, [280](#)
Children’s Strike, [4](#)
Churchill, Winston, [381](#)
City College (New York City), [178–80](#)
Clark, Senator Bennett Champ, [265–66](#)
Cobb, Lee J., [192](#)
Coburn, Charles, [304](#)
Coca, Imogene, [272](#)
Cocteau, Jean, [174](#)
Cohan, George M., [183](#)
Cohen, Mickey:
 descriptions of, [278–79](#), [339](#), [356–57](#)
 downfall of, [356](#)
 Benny Siegel and, [302](#), [305](#), [306](#), [307](#)
 temper of, [356](#)
 Zionism and, [280–85](#), [300](#)
Cohn, Harry, [84](#), [202](#), [246](#), [351](#)
Conn, Leonore. *See* Annenberg, Leonore Cohn
Coleman, McAlister, [72](#)
Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), [318](#)
Columbia Pictures Corporation, formation of, [202](#)
Commentary, [274](#)
Commercial Cable Company, [101–02](#)
Communist witch-hunt, [343–52](#)
Coolidge, Calvin, [115](#), [315](#)
Coughlin, Father Charles, [339](#)
Crawford, Joan, [292](#)
Cronkite, Walter, [351](#)

Cukor, George, 381

Dan, Uri, 356

Dance, Charlie, Dance, 274

Dark Angel, The, 196

Da Silva, Howard (Howard Silverblatt), 345–46

Davies, Marion, 196

Davis, Bette, 371

Davis, Sir Mortimer, 214

Day, Richard, 229

Dearborn Independent, 138

Debs, Eugene V., 69, 108

Dee, P. S., 125, 134

Del Rio, Dolores, 196

DeMille, Cecil Blount, 86–88, 93, 195, 196, 201

DeMille, William C., 86–87

Dempsey, Jack, 159, 234, 235

Dewey, Thomas E., 294

DeWitt, Margaret, 121–22

Dillingham, S. W., 125, 134

Disney, Walt, 267

Dix, Richard, 203

Dodsworth, 208

Donghia, Angelo, 376

Duer, Katherine Alexander. *See* Mackay, Katherine Alexander Duer

Dufy, Raoul, 174

du Pont, Eugene E., 199, 200

du Pont, Henry F., 199, 200

du Pont, T. Coleman, 199, 200

du Pont family, xi, 368

Earth and High Heaven, 268

Eastern European Jews. *See* Russian Jews

East Side (New York City):

Lower, 3–6, 9, 12–13, 18–19, 22–23, 26–27, 29, 31, 32, 77–79, 138–41, 147

Upper, 12–13, 146, 175–76
Einstein, Albert, 315
Eisenberg, Dennis, 356
Eisenhower, Dwight D., 341, 342
Ellis Island, 42
Emanu-El, Temple (New York City), 292, 310–13
Epstein, Jacob, 32
Espionage Law, 119
Espy, Reeves, 229
Eternal City, The, 208
Evlanoff, Michael, 225

Fairbanks, Douglas, 192, 208, 381
Famous Players—Lasky, 92–95
Farnum, Dustin, 87, 88
Farrar, Geraldine, 197
Faye, Alice, 278
Ferber, Edna, 230
Fiddler on the Roof, 346
Fine, Sylvia, 272
Firpo, Luis Angel, 159
Fisher, Max M., 165
Fisher, William (Velvil Fisch), 165
Five Towns (Long Island, NY), 321–24
Flamingo Hotel (Las Vegas), 301–08
Flowers, Maude B., 116, 119–20
Ford, Henry, xi, 138, 269, 313, 339
Ford, John, 232–33
Ford Foundation, 313
Founding Father, The, 257
Fox, William, 112, 191
Foy, Thelma Chrysler, 289
Frank, Helena, 69
Freeman, Monroe E., 341, 342
Frick, Henry Clay, xi, 3, 130n.
Front Page, The, 274

Gable, Clark, [192](#)
Gardner, Ava, [278](#)
Garfield, John (Julius Garfinkle), [192](#), [346–47](#)
Garland, Judy, [278](#)
Garson, Greer, [293](#)
Gebhardt, Florence E., [116](#), [121](#), [134](#)
Gelbfisz, Shmuel. *See* Goldwyn, Samuel
General League of Jewish Workers in Russia, Poland, and Lithuania, [38](#)
German-American Bund, [339](#)
German Jews, [11–24](#), [145–47](#)
 gambling and, [79–80](#)
 Reform Judaism of, [13–14](#)
 Russian Jews vs., [12](#), [15](#), [20–21](#), [22](#), [23–24](#), [291–92](#), [309–14](#), [332–33](#)
 wealth of, [11–12](#), [15](#), [20](#)
Gershwin, George, [188](#)
Giannini, Amadeo Peter, [197](#), [206](#)
Gibson, Charles Dana, [52](#), [70](#)
Gide, André, [174](#)
Gilbert, John, [205](#)
Glyn, Elinor, [111](#)
Goddard, Paulette (Pauline Levee), [192](#)
Godsol, Frank Joseph, [198–201](#), [202](#)
“Goldbergs, The,” [347](#)
Goldfish, Sam. *See* Goldwyn, Samuel
Goldman, Emma, [3](#), [114](#), [122](#), [129](#)
Goldwyn, Blanche Lasky, [85–86](#), [93–94](#), [202–03](#)
Goldwyn, Frances Howard, [203–08](#), [229](#), [230](#), [273](#), [292](#), [297–99](#), [380–83](#)
Goldwyn, Samuel (Shmuel Gelbfisz), [32](#), [262](#), [264](#), [268](#)
 career in films of, [85–95](#), [191](#), [195–201](#), [208](#), [227–33](#)
 daughter Ruth and, [94](#), [202–03](#), [270](#)
 divorce of, [94](#), [202–03](#)
 early career of, [84–85](#)
 emigration from Poland, [33–35](#)
 as executive, [227–33](#)
 film financing and, [197–201](#)
 generosity of, [237](#), [270](#)

Goldwynisms of, 229–30
forms Goldwyn Pictures, 95
Danny Kaye and, 272–74
last illness of, 382
marriage to Frances Howard, 203–08, 380–83
marriage to Blanche Lasky, 86, 93–94, 202–03
feud of, with Louis B. Mayer, 228
forms Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 201
reaction of, to Nazis, 258
Louella Parsons and, 296
as publicist, 195–96
social aspirations of, 295–99, 351
Squaw Man and, 87–89
views of, on television, 319
Anzia Yezierska and, 110, 111–12
Adolph Zukor and, 93–95, 201
Goldwyn, Samuel, Jr., 336, 382
Gompers, Samuel, 71
Gone with the Wind, 261
Good Citizenship, 75–76
Gordon, Leon, 294
Gould, Anna, 331
Gould, Jay, 331
Gourielli-Tchkonina, Archil, 225, 293
Grable, Betty, 278, 279–80, 282
Graham, Gwendolyn, 268
Grand Concourse (Bronx, NY), 177, 178, 320
Graustark, 231–32
Great Gatsby, The, 374, 375
Griffith, D. W., 88
Guggenheim, Benjamin, 105
Guggenheim family, 12
Guinness, Mrs. Loel, 289
Gunzburg, Baron Alain de, 332
Gunzburg, Minda Bronfman de, 332, 361
Gussev, Sergei, 254

Guzik, Jacob “Greasy Thumb,” 149

Haganah, 281, 282

Halkett, Sarah Phelps Stokes, 58

Hall, John, 232

Hamilton, Gertrude, 120

Hand, Learned, 95

Harding, Warren G., 315

Harlem (New York City), 320

Harlow, Jean, 111

Harmonie Club (New York City), 314

Harper’s Bazaar, 59, 60, 65

Harper’s Weekly, 29

Hayward, Leland, 262

Hebrew language, 14, 24

Hebrew Standard, 24, 64–65

Hecht, Ben, 258–62, 263, 264, 265, 274, 280, 281, 284

Helleu, Paul, 174

Hellman, Lillian, 231, 344

Hello, Dolly!, 381

Helpful Thoughts, 10

Hepburn, Katharine, 381

Herberg, Will, 73

Hespeler, William, 216

Hewlett, NY, 321, 322

Hill, “Chick,” 306

Hill, Virginia, 302–03, 305, 307

Hillcrest Country Club (Los Angeles), 267–68

Hillquit, Morris, 70

Hine, Lewis W., 46

His Girl Friday, 274

Hitler, Adolf, 255, 275, 287, 289 *see also* Nazis

Hoffman, Dustin, 87n.

Holiday magazine, 337

Hollywood Black List, 344–49

Hollywood Ten, 345

Holman, Libby (Catherine Holzman), 189
Hoover, Herbert, 315
Hoover, John Edgar, 114
Hopper, Hedda, 264, 345, 349, 351
Houdini, Harry (Ehrich Weiss), 189
House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), 343–49, 351
Howard, Frances. *See* Goldwyn, Frances Howard
Hughes, Howard, xi
Hughes, Rupert, 110, 197
Hungry Hearts, 110, 111, 113
Huntley, Chet, 351
Hurricane, 232–33

I Can Get It for You Wholesale, 274
International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), 70–73
Inwood, NY, 321, 323
Irgun Tzevai Leumi, 259, 281, 282, 284
Israel:
 American Jews and, 353–54, 358–59
 creation of, 280–86, 289

Jabotinsky, Vladimir, 259–60, 263
James, Harry, 282
Javits, Jacob, 23, 32
Jerome, V. J., 219n.
Jewish Chautauqua Society of Philadelphia, 76
Jewish Daily Forward, 27, 31, 47–48, 55, 61, 62, 99, 137–38
Jewish Daily News. *See* *Tageblatt*
Johnson, Lady Bird, 289
Johnson, Nunnally, 262
Johnson, Philip, 362
Jolson, Al (Asa Yoelson), 176, 189, 190, 231
Joyce, James, 174

Kael, Pauline, 274
Kahn, Otto, 321

Kansas City Star, 117–19, 126, 132
Kattleman, Belden, 246
Kaufman, George S., 274
Kaye, Danny (David Daniel Kominski), 32, 191, 272–74
Keaton, Buster, 184
Kennedy, Jacqueline, 289, 381
Kennedy, John F., 155, 381
Kennedy, Joseph P., 155, 256–58, 261, 267
Kennedy, Robert F., 155
Kern, Jerome, 188
Kessler, Julius, 248–52
Kid from Spain, 231
Kishinev massacre, 37, 68
Kiss, Aladar V., 168
Klopfner, Donald, 378
Kobre, Max, 139, 140
Kohler, Rabbi Kaufmann, 23
Kohlmar, Fred, 229
Kohn, Morris, 89–91
kosher food, 14, 312
Ku Klux Klan, 339

Laemmle, Carl, 202
Lahr, Bert (Irving Lahrheim), 192
Lambert, Jean, 361, 363
Lambert, Phyllis Bronfman, 361–63
Lamour, Dorothy, 233
Landau, Eli, 356
Lansky, Anna, 340
Lansky, Bernard (“Buddy”), 340, 341
Lansky, Meyer (Meyer Suchowljansky), xiii
 Samuel Bronfman and, 155, 159–63, 210
 as crime figure, 148–55, 300–07, 339
 criminal record of, 356, 358
 death of, 359
 descriptions of, 82, 150, 160, 356–57

early gambling experience of, 82–83
family of, 340–42, 357
in gambling business, 212–13, 277, 299–307
government surveillance of, 355–59
home of, 176
Las Vegas and, 277–78, 300–07
philanthropy of, 271
in Poland, 80–82
Prohibition and, 151–55, 159, 209–11
social ambitions of, 340–42
Zionism and, 283, 284, 354, 358–59, 360
Lansky, Meyer, II, 342
Lansky, Paul, 340, 341, 342
Lansky, Sandra (“Sally”). *See* Rappaport, Sandra
Lansky Lardner, Ring, Jr., 345
La Rocque, Rod, 195–96
Lasky, Blanche. *See* Goldwyn, Blanche Lasky
Lasky, Jesse, 85, 86, 87, 88, 92, 94, 201
Lasky, Ruth, 94, 203, 270
Las Vegas, 277–78, 300–08
Laughing Bill Hyde, 197
Lauren, Jerry, 374
Lauren, Ralph (Ralph Lifschitz), 32, 373–77
Lauren, Ricky, 376
Lawrence, NY, 321, 323
Lazarus, Emma, 17
Lehman, Mrs. Arthur, 332
Lehman, Ernest H., 76
Lemlich, Clara, 71
Levine, Calman, 242–43, 249, 328, 329–31
Levine, Calman, II, 328
Levine, Isaac Don, 43–46
Levine, Rita, 331
Levy, Beatrice Nathan Straus, 327–28
Lewis, Thomas J., 225
Lilly, Doris, 282

Lindbergh, Charles A., [265](#)
Linder, Lily, [270](#)
Linen, James A., [364](#)
Livingstone, Mary, [371](#)
Lloyd, Mildred, [196](#)
Loeb, Ann Margaret. *See* Bronfman, Ann Margaret Loeb
Loeb, John L., [332](#)
Loeb, Phillip, [347–48](#)
Loeb, Solomon, [332](#)
Loew, Arthur, [230](#)
Loew, Marcus, [89–91](#), [192](#), [201](#), [235](#)
London, Meyer, [70](#)
London Daily Mail, [3](#)
Long Island, NY, [321–24](#)
Loos, Anita, [204](#), [228](#)
Louis of Battenberg, Prince, [185](#)
Lubitsch, Ernst, [205](#), [261–62](#)
Luciano, Charles “Lucky” (Salvatore Lucania), [148](#), [212–13](#), [306–07](#),
[354](#)
Ludwig, Daniel K., [xi](#)
Lullaby, [260](#)
Lykusky, Dr., [172–73](#)
Lynch, Mel Patrick, [366](#), [367](#)
Lyons, Eugene, [105](#)

MacArthur, Charles, [274](#)
Mackay, Clarence, [349](#)
Mackay, Ellin. *See* Berlin, Ellin Mackay
Mackay, John William, [349](#)
Mackay, Katherine Alexander Duer, [349](#)
McLellan, George, [30](#)
MacRae, Joel, [295](#)
Making Profits, [152](#)
Mandel, Adolf, [139](#), [140](#)
Mann, Melanie. *See* Bronfman, Melanie Mann Manuel of Portugal, [62](#)
Marconi, Guglielmo, [101](#), [103](#), [315](#)

Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America, 103
Marie, Queen, of Rumania, 297
Mark, Mitchell, 89, 90, 91
Marlow, Frank D., 124–25
Marshall, Louis, 11, 20, 21–22, 29, 30, 309–11
Marx, Sam, 231–32, 335
Marx Brothers, 191, 192
Matoff, Jean Bronfman, 156, 215
Matoff, Paul, 215, 363
Mayer, Irene. *See* Selznick, Irene Mayer
Mayer, Louis B., 32, 84, 191, 232, 261, 268, 335
 feud of, with Samuel Goldwyn, 228
 MGM and, 201–02
 philanthropies of, xiii, 269
 politics of, 294
 racehorse breeding and, 294–95
 social aspirations of, 293–95, 350–51
May Laws (Russian), 37
Medal for Benny, A, 344
Meir, Golda, 358–59
Meredith, Burgess, 264
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer:
 Edgar Bronfman and, 368
 formation of, 201
Metropolitan News Company, 98–99
Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig, 362
Milestone, Lewis, 345, 348–49
Miller, Alice Duer, 111
Mix, Tom, 196
Montgomery, Field Marshal Bernard, 230
Moore, Annette, 126–27
Morgan, Anne, 13, 59, 71
Morgan, J. P., xi
Morgenthau, Henry, Jr., 245
Morton, Samuel “Nails,” 339–40
Mostel, Kate, 348

Mostel, Zero, 346, 348
Mother Earth, 3, 130n.
Mudd, Roger, 351
My life for Beauty, 170

Nast, Coudert, 203
National Broadcasting Company (NBC), 315, 318
National Council of Jewish Women, 10
Nazis, 258–67, 270–71 *see also* Adolf Hitler
Neales, Eddie, 280
Negri, Pola, 154, 205
Newhouse, Samuel Irving, xi
Newman, Peter C., 334–36
New York Herald, 100–01
New York Sun, 72
New York Times, 42–43, 52–53, 57, 61–63
New York Tribune, 5
Nicholas I of Russia, 36–37
Nicholas II of Russia, 46
Nicholson, Nick, 185
Nixon, Richard, 279
Normand, Mabel, 203, 204
North American Review, 29

O’Brien, Esmé, 332
Ochs family, 15
O’Higgins, Patrick, 170–71, 173, 175n.
Olympic, 104–05
Ostrow, Stuart, 368

Pale of Settlement, 22, 38
Paley, Mrs. William S., 289
Palmer, Alexander, 114
Pankhurst, Emmeline, 4
Paramount Pictures, 87
Parsons, Louella, 196, 296

Pastor, Anna, [61](#)
Pastor, Rose Harriet. *See* Stokes, Rose Harriet Pastor
Patrick, Ted, [337](#)
Patterson, John H., [263](#)
Pepper, Senator Claude, [263](#)
Perske, Betty Joan. *See* Bacall, Lauren
Phelps Stokes. *See* Stokes
Picasso, Pablo, [174](#)
Pichel, Irving, [344](#)
Pickfair mansion, [208](#)
Pickford, Mary, [86](#), [208](#), [381](#)
Pippin, [368](#)
pogroms, [37–38](#)
Popkin, Henry, [274–75](#)
Porgy and Bess, [231](#)
Post, Marjorie Merriweather, [289](#)
Potok, Anna Apfelbaum, [288–89](#)
Potok, Leon, [288](#)
Prisoner of Zenda, The, [231](#)
Pritzker, Nicholas J., [xi](#)
Prohibition, [150–55](#), [159–63](#), [209–12](#), [241–42](#), [245–46](#), [248](#)
Proskauer, Bertha Richman, [12](#)
Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, [138](#)
Proust, Marcel, [174](#)
Purcell, James N., [125](#), [134](#)
pushcart peddlers, [18–19](#), [28–29](#), [75–76](#)

Queen Elizabeth, [92](#)
Quigley, Martin, [262](#)

Radio Act, [105](#)
Radio Corporation of America (RCA):
 formation of, [233–34](#)
 television and, [317–19](#)
 World's Fair pavilion of, [317](#)
Rady, Maxwell, [161](#)

Rady, Rose Bronfman, 156, 161
Raft, George, 148, 277, 304
Randall, George, 216
Random House, David Sarnoff's negotiations for, 378–79
Rappaport, Sandra Lansky, 340, 341, 357
Rather, Dan, 351
Ratoff, Gregory, 264
Reagan, Nancy, 289
Reasoner, Harry, 351
Redford, Robert, 375
Red Ribbon on a White Horse, 238
Reform Judaism, 13–14, 311–12, 328
Reizenstein, Elmer. *See* Rice, Elmer
Reles, Abe “Kid Twist,” 149
Rice, Elmer, 69, 108
Richman, Julia, 4–29
 affluence of, 11–13
 background of, 7–8
 death of, 76
 personality of, 6, 7
 pushcart vendors and, 28–29
 as school administrator, 9–11, 24–27
 smallpox vaccinations and, 4–5
 as teacher, 8
 writings of, 75–76
Rinehart, Mary Roberts, 197
Risse, Louis, 177
RKO Pictures, formation of, 257
Robinson, Edward G. (Emmanuel Goldberg), 32, 192
Rockefeller, John D., 114
Rogers, Ginger, 334
Rogers, Lela, 334
Rogers, Will, 110, 197
Romaine, Isaac, 219
Romeo and Juliet, 232
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 234–35, 255, 256, 264, 297, 315

Roosevelt, Theodore, [20](#), [51](#), [52](#)
Rose, Billy (William Rosenberg), [190](#)
Rosenfeld, Morris, [69](#)
Rosenstiel, Leonore Conn, [246–47](#)
Rosenstiel, Lewis, [245–48](#), [330](#)
Rosenthal, Jack, [354](#)
Rosenwald, Julius, [18](#)
Rosenwald family, [15](#)
Rosner, Saidye. *See* Bronfman, Saidye Rosner
Roth, Emery, [32](#), [166–69](#)
Roth, Richard, [169](#)
Roth, Richard, Jr., [169](#)
Rothstein, Arnold “the Brain,” [149](#)
Rubin, Robert, [201](#), [202](#)
Rubinstein, Ceska, [172](#)
Rubinstein, Helena, [32](#), [170–75](#), [224–27](#), [292–93](#), [336](#)
Rubinstein, Horace, [336](#)
Rubinstein, Manka, [172](#)
Rubinstein, Roy, [336](#)
Rubinstein, Stella, [226](#)
Ruby, Jack, [155n](#).
Russian Jews, [12–32](#)
 assimilation of, [139–41](#), [145–47](#), [267–70](#), [289](#), [372–73](#)
 attitudes of, [16–17](#), [19](#)
 bank collapses of, [139–40](#)
 crime among, [78–80](#), [147–50](#), [338–40](#) (*see also* bootlegging; Las Vegas)
 differences among, [31–32](#), [73](#)
 drive of, [236–39](#)
 education of, [24–27](#), [178–80](#)
 gambling and, [79](#), [82–83](#)
 German Jews vs., [12](#), [15](#), [20–21](#), [22](#), [23–24](#), [291–92](#), [309–14](#), [332–33](#)
 humor of, [19–20](#)
 immigration of, [16](#), [20–21](#), [33–35](#), [39–43](#)
 language of, [24–25](#), [27](#)
 living conditions of, in New York City, [16](#), [17](#), [18–19](#), [22–23](#)

in Los Angeles, 267–69
names of, 17, 24n.
reaction of, to Nazis, 258–67
in New York City, 12–32
occupations of, 16–17, 19, 146–47
postwar mobility of, 320–24
prostitution among, 79, 150
refugees during World War II, 271
religion of, 14
life in Russia of, 35–38
in show business, 189–93
theater of, 20, 80, 189

Sacco and Vanzetti, 114

Salome of the Tenements, 108, 112

Salter, “Nigger Mike,” 184–85

Sanders, George, 304

Sands, Lettice. *See* Stokes, Lettice Sands

Sanger, Margaret Higgins, 69

Sarnoff, Abe, 99

Sarnoff, David, 32, 268, 347

career in broadcasting of, 101–07, 316–19

childhood of, 39–40, 97–100

ego of, 377–80

emigration of, 39

as executive, 233–36, 378–79

forms RKO Pictures, 257

home of, 314–19

trip to Israel of, 354

son Robert and, 333

television and, 316–19

Titanic and, 104–07

Sarnoff, Edward, 315

Sarnoff, Felicia Schiff Warburg, 332

Sarnoff, Irving, 97

Sarnoff, Leah, 97, 102

Sarnoff, Lew, 97, 99
Sarnoff, Lizette, 314, 379
Sarnoff, Morris, 97, 99
Sarnoff, Robert, 315, 332–33
Sarnoff, Thomas, 315
Saturday Evening Post, 337
Schenck, Joseph, 201, 257–58
Schenck, Nicholas, 201
Schiff, Dorothy, 350
Schiff, Jacob H., 5, 11, 20, 21–22, 29, 30, 146, 309–10, 332
Schulberg, Budd, 236
Schwartz, Richard, 357, 358, 361
Schwartzhaupt, Emil, 249, 251
Schwengel, Frank, 329
Scoundrel Time, 344
Seagram, Joseph, 215–16
Seagram tower, 361–62
Seligman, Joseph, 30
Seligman family, 12
Selwyn, Archibald, 95, 201
Selwyn, Edgar, 95, 201
Selznick, David O., 84, 230, 261–63
Selznick, Irene Mayer, 261
Selznick, Lewis, 261
Sert, Misia, 174
Shearer, Norma, 196
Shubert, Jacob, 190, 198
Shubert, Lee, 190, 198
Shubert, Sam, 190, 198
Shulman, Irving, 274
Siegel, Benjamin “Bugsy,” 148–49, 150, 277–79, 300, 301–08
Siegel, Esther Krakower, 301–02, 306
Silberfeld, Louis, 171, 172
Simon, Sir John, 258
Simpson, A. E., 4–5
Slaughter Trail, 346

Smiley, Allen, 306
Smith, Alfred E., 177
Smith, Gerald L. K., 339
Smith, Howard K., 351
Snow, C. P., 350
Snyder, Ted, 186, 188
Socialist party:
 public attitude toward, 139
 split in, 116
 Rose Stokes in, 68–71, 74–75, 108, 113, 116, 118–37, 218–19, 252–53
 violence and, 71, 113–15
 Zionism and, 280
Social Register, 57, 58–59, 67, 134
“Songs of Labor,” 69
Sousa, John Philip, 181
South of God, 254
Spellman, Francis Cardinal, 269
Spiegel, Sam, 264
Squaw Man, The, 87–89
Stanwyck, Barbara, 371
Stedman, Seymour, 120–21, 122–24, 126, 134–36
Stein, Gertrude, 174
Stella Dallas, 208
Sterling, Andy, 181
Stern, Joseph, 185, 186
Stern Gang, 281
Stewart, Jimmy, 371
Stokes, Anson Phelps, 57
Stokes, Anson Phelps, Jr., 58
Stokes, Caroline M. Phelps, 58
Stokes, Ethel Phelps, 58
Stokes, Isaac Newton Phelps, 58
Stokes, James Graham Phelps, 53–64
 background of, 57–58, 59–60
 death of, 352
 description of, 56, 57

divorce of, [217–18](#)
engagement of, to Rose Pastor, [53](#), [59–62](#)
marriage of, [62–66](#), [108](#), [136–37](#)
remarriage of, [218](#)
at Rose's sedition trial, [136–37](#)
in Socialist party, [69](#), [108](#), [113](#)

Stokes, Lettice Sands, [218](#), [351–52](#)

Stokes, Mildred Phelps, [58](#)

Stokes, Rose Harriet Pastor, [51–74](#), [107–09](#), [118–37](#), [352](#)
background of, [53–54](#), [59–60](#)
death of, [252–54](#)
divorce of, [217–18](#)
engagement of, to Graham Stokes, [53](#), [59–62](#)
marriage of, [62–66](#), [108](#), [136–37](#)
remarriage of, [219](#)
sedition trial of, [119–37](#)
in Socialist party, [68–71](#), [74–75](#), [108](#), [113](#), [116](#), [118–37](#), [218–19](#), [252–53](#)
in *Social Register*, [67](#), [134](#), [219](#)
as *Tageblatt* reporter, [55–56](#)
temperament of, [109](#)

Stokes, Sarah Phelps. *See* Halkett, Sarah Phelps Stokes

Stone, Harold, [347](#)

Story of Seagram's Seven Crown, The, [331](#)

Stout, Mr. (*Kansas City Star* editor), [126](#)

Straus, Beatrice Nathan. *See* Levy, Beatrice Nathan Straus

Straus, Irma Nathan, [327](#)

Straus, Isidor, [104](#)

Straus, Jesse Isador, [327](#)

Straus family, [15](#)

Suchowljansky, Meyer. *See* Lansky, Meyer

Sullivan, Eva J., [124](#)

Sullivan, Harry, [120](#), [134–36](#)

Sulzberger family, [15](#)

Swan, The, [203](#)

Swanson, Gloria, [154](#), [203](#), [257](#), [381](#)

Taft, William Howard, 104
Tageblatt (Jewish Daily News), 29–30, 54, 55, 56, 61, 62, 97, 98, 99, 137
Talmadge, Constance, 196, 205
Talmadge, Norma, 196, 205
Tarnower, Dr. Herman, 313–14
Taurog, Norman, 232
Taussig, William, 152
Taylor, Robert, 346
Temple Emanu-El (New York City), 292, 310–13
Tender Comrade, 345
Tenderfoot, The, 274
Teriaca, Craig, 357
Thalberg, Irving, 84, 196, 202
Thayer, E. V. R., 199
They Shall Have Music, 232
Thirty a Week, 197
Thornton, Jimmy, 181
Tilzer, Harry Von, 181
Titanic, 102, 104–06
Titus, Edward, 174
Too Many Kisses, 203
Toscanini, Arturo, 315
Townshend, Lady Carolyn, 365–66
Tracy, Spencer, 381
Triangle Shirtwaist Company, 52, 73, 75n.
Truman, Harry S, 284–85
Trumbo, Dalton, 345
Tucker, Sophie (Sonia Kalish), 176, 189, 191, 272
Turner, Lana, 278
Turn of the Wheel, The, 197

Ullmann, Liv, 371
United Hebrew Charities, 20, 21
Up in Arms, 272–73, 274

Valentino, Rudolph, 192

Valley of the Dolls, 381–82
Vanderbilt, William Henry, xiv
Vidor, King, 205, 228
Vladeck, Baruch, 137–38, 139
Volstead Act, 150, 210 *see also* Prohibition
Vuillard, Jean Edouard, 174

Wald, Lillian, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13
Wallenberg, Raul, 266
Warburg, Felicia Schiff. *See* Sarnoff, Felicia Schiff Warburg
Warburg, Felix, 146, 332
Wards Island buildings, 22
Warner, Harry, 261, 262
Warner brothers, 192
Watch on the Rhine, 344
Webb, Alexander, 178
Webb, Georgiana Eileen. *See* Bronfman, Georgiana Eileen Webb
Webster, Horace, 178
Weidman, Jerome, 274
Weinberg, Sidney, 313
Weislander, Anna, 53
Weislander, Jacob, 53
Weizmann, Chaim, 259
Westchester County, NY, 320–21
West Side (New York City), 140, 176
Whalen, Richard J., 257
Whiskey Trust, 209
Widener, Harry Elkins, 105
Williams, Earl, 205–06
Willkie, Fred, 329
Willkie, Wendell L., 329
Wilshire Boulevard Temple (Los Angeles), 269
Wilson, Woodrow, 315
Winchell, Walter, 274
Windsor, Duchess of, 289, 297
Wise, Isaac Mayer, 14

Wise, Rabbi Stephen, 266
Wizard of Oz, The, 232
Woman Who Wouldn't, The, 69
Women's Christian Temperance Union, 150
Woodmere, NY, 321, 323
Woodmere Academy, 323–24
Wuthering Heights, 208, 296

Yarmulowsky, L., 139
Yarmulowsky, M., 139
Yeziarska, Anzia, 108, 109–13, 237–39
Yiddish theater, 20, 80, 189
yikhes, 214, 216–17
Young, Loretta, 295
Young, Owen D., 234
Young Edison, 269
Yulnowski, Charlie “the Jew,” 283

Zangwill, Israel, 61
Zanuck, Darryl, 231
Zanuck, Richard, 381
Ziegfeld, Florenz, 190
Zionism, 280–86, 289 *see also* Israel
Zitkin, Clara, 254
Zukor, Adolph, 32, 89–92, 93, 94–95, 192, 201, 257, 371–72
Zwillman, Abner “Longie,” 149

About the Author

Stephen Birmingham (1929–2015) was an American author of more than thirty books. Born in Hartford, Connecticut, he graduated from Williams College in 1953 and taught writing at the University of Cincinnati. Birmingham's work focuses on the upper class in America. He's written about the African American elite in *Certain People* and prominent Jewish society in *Our Crowd: The Great Jewish Families of New York*, *The Grandees: The Story of America's Sephardic Elite*, and *The Rest of Us: The Rise of America's Eastern European Jews*. His work also encompasses several novels including *The Auerbach Will*, *The LeBaron Secret*, *Shades of Fortune*, and *The Rothman Scandal*, and other nonfiction titles such as *California Rich*, *The Grandes Dames*, and *Life at the Dakota: New York's Most Unusual Address*.

All rights reserved, including without limitation the right to reproduce this ebook or any portion thereof in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of the publisher.

“*Our Crowd*” copyright © 1967 by Stephen Birmingham

The Macmillan Company for the letters of Otto Kahn which appeared in *The Many Lives of Otto Kahn* by Mary Jane Mate, copyright © 1963 by Margaret D. Ryan.

The Grandees copyright © 1971 by Stephen Birmingham

“*The Rest of Us*” copyright © 1984 by Stephen Birmingham

The author is grateful to the following for permission to quote from copyrighted material:

From “The East European Immigrant Jew in America (1881–1981): Isaac Don Levine, Letters of an Immigrant,” *American Jewish Archives*, April 1981, Volume XXXIII, Number 1. By permission of American Jewish Archives.

From *The New York Times*, September 1, 1967. Copyright © 1967 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted by permission.

From BRONFMAN DYNASTY by Peter C. Newman. Copyright © 1978 by Peter C. Newman. Reprinted by permission of the author and the Canadian publishers, McClelland and Stewart Limited, Toronto.

Cover designs by Angela Goddard

ISBN: 978-1-5040-3895-9

This edition published in 2016 by Open Road Integrated Media, Inc.

180 Maiden Lane

New York, NY 10038

www.openroadmedia.com





EARLY BIRD BOOKS

FRESH EBOOK DEALS, DELIVERED DAILY

BE THE FIRST TO KNOW—

NEW DEALS HATCH EVERY DAY!

SIGN UP NOW
at www.EarlyBirdBooks.com

STEPHEN BIRMINGHAM

FROM OPEN ROAD MEDIA







Find a full list of our authors and titles at www.openroadmedia.com

FOLLOW US:

